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The SMART SET

*A Magazine of
Cleverness*



The SMART SET

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HALF A HUNDRED BURLESQUES, EPIGRAMS, POEMS, SHORT SATIRES, ETC.

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The SMART SET

Edited by
GEORGE JEAN NATHAN
and
H. L. MENCKEN



The Princess Almeena

By Clark Ashton Smith

FROM her balcony of pearl, the Princess Almeena, clad in a gown of irisated silk, with her long and sable locks unbound, gazes toward the sunset-flooded sea beyond a terrace of green marble that peacocks guard. Below, in the tinted light, fantastic trees whose boles are serpentine, trail a fine and hair-like foliage, mingling with the moon-shaped leaves of enormous lilies. Rainbow-coloured reeds cluster about the pool and fountains of black water that are rimmed with carved malachite. But these the princess does not heed, but gazes only upon the far-off seas, where the golden ichors of the sun

have gathered in a vast lake overflowing the horizon.

Ere long a wind from the west, from islands where palm trees blossom above the purple foam, brings in its breath the odour of unknown flowers to mingle with the balms of the garden and the sweet suspiration of the princess—the princess who dreams, listening to the wind, that her lover, the captain of the emperor's most redoubtable trireme of war, sailing the sky-blue seas beyond the horizon and the sunset, has remembered her wild and royal loveliness, and has breathed in his heart a secret sigh.



Truth

By C. R. Corbin

THE funeral was gorgeous, befitting a world-famous scientist. There were twelve honorary pallbearers and five carloads of flowers. The newspapers devoted many columns of eulogy to the great man who had given his life that others might live. The doctors said he was the victim of death-dealing germs with which he was battling in his laboratory.

The doctors lied.

He caught pneumonia while prostrate on the floor in his pajamas, trying to hear the quarrel in the apartment below.



Acknowledgment

By Luis Muñoz Marin

FOR the stars,
For the wind, for the flowers, for the sea,
For people,
For all things below the stars,
All praise be to God.

For the fact that all these are good to me,
All praise be to you.



WOMEN seldom kiss really well. Their minds are not on it. They are always thinking of what they are going to wheedle out of the man for the kiss.



THERE are two kinds of wives, both being sure of their husbands. The difference consists in what they are sure of.

The Guardian of Honour

(A Complete Novelette)

By *L. M. Hussey*

CHAPTER I

GENERAL GONZALES, usually the dominant one, was now balked by his wife's rat-like ferocity. She was in a corner with an animal's determination to fight. In her taut hands she grasped a heavy vase, held it uplifted over his head, and even though he no longer advanced, nor threatened her further, he was apprehensive lest she hurl it anyhow.

He knew it was useless to attempt her proposed chastisement at this moment. His own fury had not been quick enough—and she was so much like a cat, so agile, so swift to elude his clutch. He stood in front of her, therefore, without movement, and a laborious sneer lifted his moustache and revealed his contemptuous lips.

"*Señora*," he said, "you look very natural. You should be caged in a zoo with the other animals. But—" (he glared at her with a sudden ferocity that made her clutch the vase in a firmer grip) "—if I find you carrying my name about among dogs of that sort again, you'll live to regret it; you'll surely regret it!"

He stepped back a little until he felt sure that he was out of range and then, turning, walked out into the corridor.

Through the door he could see his daughter Virginia fondling her tame parrot in the court. His son Ismael was lying under a palm tree, reading a paper-backed book.

He passed out and approached Virginia. The girl, still holding the parrot perched on one of her slender

fingers, raised her jet eyes to his with an understanding and even sympathetic glance. Her calm aspect brought some subsidence of his heated temper; she was a pleasant one to look at.

"Your admirable mother was about to break a vase over my head," he muttered.

The girl sighed.

"She makes it very hard for all of us," she said. "She is irresponsible, a completely irresponsible person. What notion has she of our name, father—of your position?"

"None!" he exclaimed with a low-voiced bitterness. "I've been damned ever since the day I married her. Now I discover that she's been carrying on all sorts of coquetries with Ricardo, the chauffeur. . . ."

"And you've discharged Ricardo?"

"What! Ricardo? Of course not! Was that unfortunate man at fault? He is without doubt the best chauffeur in this city. No, I shall not sacrifice Ricardo to your mother. But when I remonstrate with her, she threatens my life with a vase. She's a woman of low impulses!"

He ceased speaking and for a time gazed down morosely at the brilliant parrot that twisted about on his daughter's hand. The bird annoyed him; it seemed to mock him a little, to gesticulate glibly at his humiliations.

Without speaking again he turned away and crossed the court, entering the hall that terminated in the street door.

His car was standing outside and he stepped into it hurriedly, as one who

escapes from a place of abominable enactments. In a moment he was speeding down the *Real de Candelaria*, eastward, with no especial goal, but with a full sense of relief.

It was rather late in the afternoon and he saw some of his friends driving past in the opposite direction, on the way to their cafés. Today he shrank from their company and from the customary pleasant hours of conversation and drinking. He had seldom been more depressed, nor his sense of failure more acute.

This was the fashionable section of the avenue. He knew each house and the families within. He thought of the wives of these men—mostly, like himself, officials of some sort in the government. Naturally, they were not all happy; no doubt very few cared anything for their women. But they kept up a certain discreet outward respectability, an appearance of amity, an avoidance of anything openly disgraceful or vulgar.

He knew their women; each one of them had some sense of her husband's honour. To go into one of these houses was to encounter inevitably the external aspect of correctness—which was all that could be asked. General Gonzales sighed. No man could demand perfection.

But his own wife was a creature of impossible indiscretions. She made no distinctions between people, none of the simple, palpable distinctions. To her, a half-breed from his plantation was as important as the Gobernador; she'd as lief talk to the one as the other.

This appalling realization, repeating itself today with a special emphasis, deepened the lines between his eyes into a frown of the most severe immobility. He felt almost weak, almost defeated. Without these special humiliations of his home, there was enough to trouble him—the difficulty of his position, the envious intrigues against him, all the insecurity of political life in his city.

He found he was reaching the out-

skirts of the town, but still he had no inclination to turn back. Ahead of him he saw the little Petari station on the electric railroad. Turning down here into the disreputable end of *El Paraiso*, he crossed the iron bridge and brought his runabout to a stop. Here he sat down without moving, staring out in front of him.

Vague, morose thoughts passed through his mind like damp fogs of unlifting discontent. The loungers on the bridge watched him in curiosity; he was palpably not one of this region. But no one was surprised. In this quarter there were houses that men of his sort were known to visit in their more trivial moments.

For a time he saw nothing. Little by little, however, his mood relaxed, passing into the one of dull resentment that usually followed upon his more acute rebellions against these domestic indignities. He turned his head and looked about him.

Down the unlovely street he saw one of those familiar blocks of houses that constitute the homes of the poorer people. They were wholly without any grace, box-like structures with staring cement walls, joined into a long rectangle, which was pierced by the door of each separate house like the inadequate openings of a row of beehives.

On the steps, before one of these doors, a young girl was seated—and now he observed that she was persistently looking at him.

CHAPTER II

At first he thought she was one of the town's women, a natural conclusion in this quarter of the city. But he finally decided against the supposition. She was too shy, and when she discovered that he had observed her, she dropped her eyes, turned her head, and pretended to interest herself in the loungers on the iron bridge.

He could see that she was somewhat nervous, for even at this distance the

intermittent tapping of her foot on the pavement was visible.

Now he was interested. The girl offered some release from his thoughts, a welcome diversion. The engine of his car was still running, and slipping in the clutch, he moved down the street, twenty or thirty yards, until he was quite near her.

She must have heard his approach, but for a few moments she gave no sign. Then, lifting her eyes to him again, she gave him a swift, sudden smile that was hidden in an instant by the rapid lowering of her face.

It was an agreeable invitation, but still he hesitated before responding to it. He was again doubtful about her status; perhaps, after all, she was only one of those women of his first surmise. Just now he had no inclination for their commonplace enchantments.

His eyes passed searchingly over her figure, observing her jetty hair that seemed to imprison the day's last sunlight in its ample coils, downward to the nearly concealed curves of her small face, her hands, her little shawl-covered shoulders, to the tip of one worn shoe that still tapped nervously on the pavement. At any rate, she was a novelty, she was different. This determined him; he stepped out of the car, and crossing the pavement, stood in front of her.

"Good afternoon, little *señorita*," he said. "Maybe you're lonely as I am and will talk to me a little."

Now she raised her face and the smile reappeared, vanishing at once and leaving her features surprisingly serious. He saw that her lips trembled a trifle when she spoke.

"Thank you, *señor*," she said. "Yes, I saw you; I'll talk to you. But come inside!"

She stood up, gathering the shawl over her slender hips with her bare arms.

Gonzales was somewhat surprised at the abruptness of her invitation.

He glanced over her shoulder, trying to pierce the dusk of the opened door

with his puzzled gaze. He could see no one inside, and his mood was such that he abandoned his customary caution and followed the girl into the house.

He found himself in one of those ordinary damp rooms, dark, disorderly. For an instant he believed himself alone with the girl, but as his eyes adjusted themselves to the inadequate light, he perceived an old woman rising up out of a gaudily painted chair and making obsequious gestures. He bowed slightly; the old woman uttered an insane cackle.

"Good day! Good day; fine *señor*, good day!" she repeated. "Yes, come in *señor*, don't be afraid of us. You've come to see my little Gloria—yes, that's right! I told her to watch for you, *señor*!"

Again she laughed, and the harsh sound was unpleasant, even sinister, as it resonated from the close walls of the dim room. Now she tottered nearer, and her glassy eyes, passing over the countenance of the visitor, fixed themselves upon the face of the girl.

She spoke again, this time with a feeble, high-pitched ferocity.

"Yes," she said, "this is my girl Gloria. I told her to watch for you. She'll be good to you! I'll see that she's good to you!"

Her words implied a surprising threat; she glared at the girl steadily. Her savagery, because of its astonishing impotence, was the more impressive. Now she was bowing again to Gonzales, and repeating her grotesque gesture many times, she retreated to a little door at the back, and disappeared.

During this prelude the girl remained near one of the gaudy yellow chairs, resting one hand on its back, and uttering no word. The poise of her head, of her shoulders, the attitude of her entire figure, was one of admixed fear and contempt. As the old woman stumbled into the next room, her shoulders drooped a little; she turned, and without meeting his eyes, faced the visitor.

Although not wholly enlightened, he was beginning to understand.

If his surmise were correct, this was not an uncommon situation in his city: an old woman, an old man, some dominant one, exploiting a youthful victim.

He looked curiously at the slight figure before him.

She was so hesitant—he could see her trembling—surely she had not gone far!

"Let us sit down," he said. "I want to talk to you."

She obeyed mutely and he drew up another of the abominable chairs and faced her.

"Who is that?" he asked.

He inclined his head toward the door, the gesture indicating the vanished hag.

"My grandmother," she replied.

Her voice was almost lifeless, and she spoke the words like a phrase from a repeated catechism.

General Gonzales smiled, but it was a slight one and his heavy moustaches concealed his curved lips. He drew his chair a little closer and lowered his voice.

"You're lying to me," he said.

For the first seconds following his accusation there was no change in her attitude. She sat as before, drooping, her head bent down, her eyes fastened on the littered floor. Then, raising her face, she met his gaze with suddenly widened eyes in which fear and surprise blended together with a startling swiftness.

Her face seemed to lose all its colour, as if, in this stranger before her, she had come to confront a grave crisis in her obscure fortunes. Several times she touched her lips with the tip of her tongue, but no words followed.

Gonzales was still silent; at last she spoke.

"Who are you?" she asked.

"That doesn't matter," he replied.

Again she hesitated.

Then, leaning toward him a little, holding tightly to the arms of her chair, she spoke rapidly, almost in a whisper, and glancing again and again

at the door in back, as if she feared the impotent old woman might issue out suddenly to strike the betraying words from her lips.

"Well, then, *señor*," she whispered, "I did lie. At least I think so. She tells me I'm her grandchild, but I don't know what the truth is. This last year she's beat me every day . . . until I'd consent. . . . Well, I did consent finally—what could I do, *señor*? You see, I did consent! Aren't you here? . . ."

With these concluding words her expression changed, and losing their configuration of indefinable terror, her features seemed to reflect another emotion, her reaction to the man seated near her. Her lips became firmer, and curling a trifle, suggested a measure of contempt. Certainly, she gave him no welcome, however complaisant she might be.

This surprised him—and interested him. To a degree, she was indubitably unusual, since—despite her outward agreement to the urgings of the old woman—she preserved within herself a fundamental and unbending spirit.

He came to a sudden resolution.

"Of course she expects you to make as much money as you can," he said.

The girl said nothing.

"Well, then," said Gonzales, "give her this."

He dropped several gold coins in her lap and before she had the opportunity to say anything in return, to make a suggestion, to reject his gift, or, more likely, to accept it and its implications under her sullen necessity, he arose from his chair and took a step toward the door.

"And that is all, *señorita*," he said.

But she understood more swiftly than he had expected, and before he could reach the door she was at his side, her small, tense hand clutching his arm.

"What do you mean?" she asked.

"What do you intend *señor*?"

Gonzales told her not to question him, told her he had no idea what he meant. It was an impulse—she had to give the

old woman some money, wasn't that true? Very well, here was the money, more than the old hag could reasonably expect; it ought to quiet her for a time. Meanwhile, he wanted nothing himself, and he would probably never see her again.

The girl, still clinging to his arm, searched his face with dark eyes of wide astonishment. He did not meet her gaze, being uncertain with what expression he should look at her. He was beginning to feel uncomfortable and to regret his impulsive act, since it was unrational. Yes, entirely without rationality, since the money could do the girl no good, except temporarily; it could not possibly save her. Moreover, since he was an unsentimental man, accepting all the various aspects of life, he knew he had no wish to save her.

Meanwhile the girl, feature by feature, examined him, as if his were a fabulous presence. Her mouth was opened a little and her quick breath arose and passed in a faint warmth across his face.

"Don't say you won't see me again!" she said at last. "You must let me meet you. I don't understand you! I want to talk to you."

He tried to disengage his arm without consenting, but her fingers tightened, gripping his coat.

"Well, then," he said, "if you want to see me we can meet."

"Where?" she asked.

He told her he would come tomorrow, but not at this house. She was to wait for him above, at the *Puente de Hierro*; there she would find him.

With this assurance she released his arm and he passed out of the house, glad of his freedom. But in a way he did not regret the appointment, for she was not without interest, and he needed interests—thoughts of other things—his customary musings too often turned to his wife. Against her he now uttered several subdued oaths.

"*Nombre de Hijo!*" he exclaimed. "She has been my doom!"

He climbed into his car and turned

back toward the *Calle Real de Candelaria*.

CHAPTER III

His daughter was having some sort of a party that evening and when he reached home there was a disagreeable bustle in the house; the servants were moving palms into the drawingroom and Virginia, like a field marshal, was directing them with strident abuse.

His saturnine mood had returned and he had no inclination to trouble himself with these activities. So he left the house almost immediately, driving over to the *Plaza Bolívar*, where he went into the little café next to the Yellow House. Here he joined a political group, among them Dr. Fernandez, that inextinguishable Nestor of the country's shifting politics.

General Gonzales was glad of this encounter. The old man was always friendly, and more than once had rescued him from difficult positions. Since Gonzales had become the Minister of War their relations had been closer.

The two went to a table together. For a time the venerable intriguer spoke only of generalities.

"*Señor General,*" he said, "we are all too quiet now. We need changes, a new aspect, ah? After all, it's true, isn't it, that no permanency is satisfying, not to any man? We must pass from purpose to purpose, from thing to thing. What are goals? Illusions, wouldn't you say? Any end is good enough, the zest is all in transition!"

They filled their glasses with a fresh charge of brandy and soda. Old Fernandez leaned across the table, became more confidential, and his rasping voice passed into a disharmonious whisper.

"At your right," he said, "is General Figueredo Paniagua, with his satellites. You haven't observed him, *señor*—you must!"

Gonzales turned in his chair and met the glance of Figueredo Paniagua. They nodded and the other General, Gonzales' subordinate, turned again to

his friends, resuming his interrupted conversation. But for a moment Gonzales continued to examine his profile, exhibiting, meanwhile, a slight but significant frown.

Figueredo Paniagua was ambitious—he understood this. They had both been candidates for the ministry; Gonzales guessed accurately that the other had always received defeat with small grace. But when all was summed up, Paniagua's influence with the army was much inferior to his own. Therefore, whilst he retained his strength and alertness, there was nothing to fear from the man playing the lesser rôle.

Gonzales turned to his old friend.

"Thank you, *señor*," he said.

"He called on the President three afternoons last week," continued Fernandez, in the same uniquely harsh whisper.

"Yes, I must watch him," agreed the General. "But, between us, what advantage can Gomez gain by doing anything for him? Who is the greater *caudillo*—myself or our estimable other General? Gomez has no reason to jeopardize his security!"

Gonzales' eyes narrowed as he said this, and the jetty eyebrows, descending, gave him a sinister aspect.

Dr. Fernandez shrugged his shoulders.

"Life is very obscene," he said. "Be watchful."

The conversation grew general once more. They drank the customary number of brandies and sodas and then, shaking hands, left for their homes.

It was late now; in the plaza a small, enthusiastic crowd had collected at the prospect of a fight. Ignoring this, Gonzales drove around to the *Candelaria* and eastward to his house.

He arrived as Virginia's guests were leaving, and was annoyed by the necessity of halting a few minutes to speak with a group of them. At last he made his escape, hurried to his room and, lighting a cigar, paced the chamber with an angry stride.

He was tired, he was vaguely op-

pressed. His domestic irritations no longer troubled him, but rather the more important necessities of his life. Somehow his strength seemed less tonight, and with this consciousness of frailty came a diminution of his assurance.

He had a clear idea of his position, of its demands. He did not underrate the forces that opposed him, nor was he blind to the unescapable intriguing that accompanied any political advantage in his country. One must be firm, be unyielding, watchful, forever alert. Tonight this necessity wearied him and he longed for some escape.

In this mood he thought of the little unlucky girl over near the *Puerto de Hierro*. He recalled his appointment with her for the following day, and the thought of it served to ease him. After all, she might divert him and so afford some moments of forgetfulness.

Much calmer at last, he undressed and went to bed. When he awoke it was morning and Virginia's parrot was whistling stridently in the garden.

CHAPTER IV

WITH several appointments to keep before noon, he dressed hurriedly. After a conference with the Gobernador, he had an agreeable interview with Gomez, the President, and returned home to luncheon in excellent spirits. His wife was nowhere about and, since her absence freed him of the customary irritations, he departed to keep the afternoon's rendezvous enlivened with a jaunty smile.

Turning into *El Paraiso* he saw the usual loungers on the bridge, the dubious figures of swarthy, furtive men, ready for unmentionable enterprises. Above these groups, in the direction of the suburban station, was a slight figure set off by a black *mantilla*; this was the girl.

He drove close to the curb; she recognized him and walked rapidly to the side of his car. He gave her a gesture to step in and, obeying, she seated herself at his side.

The girl was silent, her eyes were lowered, her face bent, and, glancing toward her, only the tip of her nose in profile was visible outside the veiling, jetty lace. She seemed inscrutable then, she had an air of mystery, and his interest was enhanced.

He drove north, toward the *Avila* where, on the outskirts of the town, he had several blocks of houses whose usufruct was enjoyed by some of his lesser retainers. Before one of these, a cement structure somewhat better than the one in which his companion lived, he stopped the car. He helped her to alight; they crossed the pavement and entered.

It was dark inside; Gonzales went to the windows and raised the shades.

"Sit down, little *señorita*," he said.

The girl did not at once obey. Dropping her shawl to her shoulders, she glanced about her with a mingled expression of curiosity and apprehension in her eyes.

Then she looked toward Gonzales and, meeting his gaze, averted her head at once.

He could see that she was trembling a little; the fringe of the black mantilla vibrated, although no air was stirring in the room. In her face he discovered none of yesterday's sullenness, nor even aloofness, but a new quality, a hesitancy, a curious diffidence. Again she seemed mysterious.

Suddenly she raised her face and met his gaze.

"I know who you are!" she said.

Her voice was low, and she spoke these words gravely.

Her unexpected declaration, with its air of mysterious pronouncement, startled the General a little. He turned his face suddenly and glanced swiftly about the room. But they were, as he had supposed, entirely alone.

"What do you mean by that?" he asked.

"She told me who you were," the girl replied.

Her reference to the old woman was not in a name, but only by means of

this stressed pronoun. Nevertheless, in uttering it, she made of the word an odious thing; she visibly shrank a little. Gonzales understood and his vague suspicions were arrested.

He smiled, half sardonically.

"Yes, I suppose *she* would know," he said. "That's her business. Did she compliment you on the catch?"

The girl, taking a step sideways, dropped into a chair, settling herself with a faint sigh. She ignored the General's flippancy and answered him with such a grave simplicity that he felt a touch of shame.

"No, she was going to beat me. You went so quickly she believed I'd lost you, but I showed her the money and then she let me alone. Then she told me who you were. It made me afraid!"

He pulled up one of the chairs and sat down opposite her.

"What is your name?" he asked.

"Gloria? Well, little one, I am General Gonzales and I suppose that does make you afraid of me, eh?"

He met her eyes with an expression half smiling and half bitter.

"This life is very ironic," he said.

"There is no need for you to be afraid; that doesn't help me any. But there are others whose fear I'd pay a great deal for."

Of course she did not comprehend his allusion, but she made no questions. Her eyes were downcast and her little hands fumbled with a bit of her dress, folding and unfolding the thin fabric with a slow nervousness.

When she spoke again her voice was very low and she did not meet his eyes.

"I don't know what you intend to do with me," she said. "I hope it will be lucky that I met you, *señor General*. Certainly you are strong enough to do anything you please with me. But it won't be anything worse than the old *señora*!"

Her admission of his power was flattering. He found now that he was distinctly pleased; he liked the little unfortunate. He was not a man whose compassion was readily touched and so her

appeal was not the easy one of sentimental pity, but shaped itself from certain subtleties—her obvious respect, her impression of his dignity and station and, to a degree, her naïve honesty.

He leaned forward a little and gathered up her hands, which yielded to his own without resistance.

"You must leave the old woman," he said. "And, perhaps, it will not be unlucky that we met each other, even for you, little *señorita*. We will see. Meanwhile, would you like to stay here? There are an old man named Pedro and his wife whom you'll come to know; they live in the next house. They will tend the place for you and do whatever you say. And I'll see your old one and make it agreeable for her to forget you, for a time, anyway."

She lifted her face to his eyes.

The black mantilla had fallen from her shoulders; it lay draped over the arms of the chair and the lace ends trailed on the floor. Her face was still grave, and for an instant her great eyes, whose jet pupils seemed miraculously enlarged in the dim light, studied his face as if in a test of his sincerity. The General found her very charming then, touching in her youth, in her helplessness and in her obscurely divined courage.

"I know now it will be a lucky thing for me," she said. "You make me very proud, *señor General*. It is strange that you should want me. . . ."

Then she smiled, her eyes widened, and all her aspect was enlivened. A swift vitality seemed to suffuse itself through her body, passing, in part, to the tired man who watched her. Her hands, still lying in his own, became tense, and the fingers, pressing his, moved in little caresses on his wrists.

"I am very lucky; I am very proud," she said. "I will be sweet to you, and I'll make you forget all the hard things that come into your life."

Her words, and the touch of her slim fingers, brought a desiderate ease into the General's spirits. He felt glad himself; it was a good thing to have found

this little one. She was eager to give him a certain needed homage, and a forgetfulness of his anxieties and failures.

But for an instant a peculiar bitterness crept into these appeasing thoughts. In this second he was fully conscious of his life's ironic thrusts—why had she come so late? Her part could only be a little one now; another had usurped her. His eyes were scrutinizing her smiling face, the appealing frailty of her rounded throat, her sloping, dusk shoulders, her slender arms, her small body.

He believed fully that she exemplified a rare sincerity. And he thought of the woman at home, the one to whom he had given his name, and who often availed herself of opportunity to trifle with his honor. It was a contrast that embittered the instant.

But her pleasant nearness brought him a return of his former softened mood. He leaned back in his chair, fixing his eyes sometimes upon her attentive face, again looking past her, almost forgetting her as a visible embodiment, but always feeling her significance—and he began to talk of himself.

As she faded in his mind to no more than a symbol of sympathy, he spoke of increasingly intimate things. It was pleasant to talk about himself, to express some of his anxieties, to even adopt, without any fear of ridicule, a certain rôle of martyrdom.

She learned about his wife, and nodded with understanding. He told her something of his political difficulties, the precariousness of being a great man. This made her eyes shine and she admired his courage.

"Sometimes I am tired," he said. "There's always an ambitious one with a knife at one's back!"

As her ears recorded them, such words as these thrilled her. Vague, romantic heroisms presented themselves to her mind and, in a vicarious way, hearing of them authentically from the lips of her companion, she shared in their attendant emotions. She was vibrating with an unused happiness. Life, she believed, had suddenly been gra-

cious to her, taking her from days of drab discomfort and from the recent swift approach of an appalling prospect—to the threshold of an incalculable glamour. In her simplicity she acknowledged a deep measure of good fortune.

Her easy emotions expanded like an opening blossom. All her apathy, her fear and her distrust had passed, dissolving in these confidences that came to her ears. She saw the man in front of her as the victim of undeserved indignities—and even of profound perils. Her naïve imagination enlarged the actual uncertainty of his position; before her understanding of this she felt curiously weak, strangely impotent.

Yet she wanted to help him; she wanted to be his protector.

Gonzales paused at last and, turning in his little chair, glanced out through the square of the small window. The light outdoors had acquired that transient clarity of the swift tropical twilight. He was astonished to find that the afternoon had gone, and regretful.

Looking at the girl now, he found that her figure had grown dim and faintly mysterious. Her little face made a white, ethereal blur against the background of the dark wall behind her.

He arose, and at his rising she stood up also.

"Must you go?" she asked.

He nodded.

"Yes, but I've been very content, little *señorita*!"

She came closer to him, she raised her hands and rested them, after a second's hesitation, on his shoulders.

"Call me Glorina!" she said.

Her slim arms curved about his neck.

"You won't leave me long?" she asked.

"No," he assured her. "Tomorrow afternoon I'll come here again. Before I go I'll stop in and arrange everything with old Pedro—he'll give you whatever you ask. Tomorrow morning, before I come, there are many things you must buy yourself. Pedro will come to my house and get money from me tonight."

She ignored his material arrangements, making no comment. Her arms

circled him more tightly; she drew down his face and kissed him.

He was surprised at the fresh charm of her young lips. He left her with regret and anticipation.

CHAPTER V

BUT the next day he went to her almost mechanically, as one who keeps, without interest, the form of a necessary habit. A certain incident of the preceding night had brought him disturbing thoughts and concerns, and with this there was commingled the disagreeable memory of the morning's encounter with his wife.

When he left her that first afternoon he was at ease, full of agreeable thoughts, and certainly without any inclination to go home. Therefore, he drove over to *La Francia*, that favourite, friendly place near the Yellow House. Upon entering the café he found a small group of acquaintances standing near the door, all clustered around Hector Calcaño, that amusing old wit of the city.

The General joined them; Calcaño was telling a presumably authentic story about his son's encounter with a policeman. The point of the tale was that Calcaño, as secretary to the Foreign Minister, issued most of the passports to those desirous of leaving the country.

"That damned son of mine," he said, "got drunk last night and came up the street about two o'clock singing an ill-advised song. He's had two or three run-ins with that fellow before, and so the officer thought he could handle him now and give him something of a scare. He was mistaken. My boy tripped him up, sat on him for a while and then, snatching off his helmet, ran up the street.

"The officer came running after him, but the boy made the door just in time and a second before he slammed it shut he threw the helmet in the fellow's face and yelled: 'Now you go to the devil!'

"The ass was so angry that he began pounding on the door. That woke me up; I raised the window, looked out and

saw him there, pulling on the doorknob as if he was crazy.

"What do you want?" I called.

"Where's your son, *señor*?" he asked.

"I don't know," I said. "In bed, I suppose."

"Well, I want him!"

"What for?"

"*Señor*, he just told me to go to the devil!"

"I stared at the idiot a moment and then, smiling, I answered him very politely:

"Well, I don't see why you come around and wake me up at this time in the night. I've no objection to you going to the devil, but I certainly can't make you out a passport now!"

Laughing, several in the group suggested that they all find a suitable table; it was acted upon and in a moment they were seated and drinks were served. To Gonzales, already in an agreeable mood, it promised to be a pleasant evening.

They had been seated, talking and drinking, for perhaps an hour, when General Figueredo Paniagua, with two or three friends, entered the café. One of his friends preceded him; someone waved from Gonzales' table, and the newcomers walked toward them.

A few feet away Figueredo Paniagua noticed the presence of General Gonzales. The latter waited for him to nod, but, astonishingly, Paniagua stopped abruptly, stared at his superior, frowned and, turning brusquely with no sign of recognition, walked to another table. His friends hesitated a moment and then followed him:

The episode escaped no one; everybody looked at Gonzales. He sat as before, but his face revealed an expression of astonishment that still dominated the assertion of his customary aplomb. His thoughts were confused; he did not understand. It was incredible to the point of unreality that Figueredo Paniagua should offer him this undreamed-of and astounding affront.

Yet, in an instant more, he understood that it was deeply significant—his rival must have received, only recently, the

scornful strength of some secret assurance. Otherwise his daring was unaccountable.

But Gonzales was too confused now to take any action on the moment, which was perhaps fortunate for him. He had learned the habit of caution, and this had accounted, in later years, for more than one of his successes. He turned to his friends, seemed to ignore the incident, and smiled. He began to speak of an utterly different thing, and so it was necessary for them to put aside their curiosity.

Still, this was a strained situation. Everybody felt that somewhere the tension must snap, and probably they looked to Gonzales to break it.

In his friends' faces there was an ineffaceable expression of expectancy, mixed with looks of waiting delight; they believed some excitement might follow.

Perhaps their anticipations would have been realized, but Figueredo Paniagua left the café before General Gonzales puzzled out any line of action. He passed by the other's table with a rapid stride, his satellites at his heels.

Gonzales turned his head and stared after him; he gripped the arms of his chair and seemed about to rise, but with the disappearance of his enemy his muscles relaxed, and he rather slouched in his chair, frowning heavily.

He was angry, puzzled and alarmed. In a measure his emotions were those of one whose particular skill begins to fail, whose grip becomes confused, whose knowledge of necessary facts is blurred. He was troubled with premonitions, with vaguely understood portents.

The difficulty and uncertainty of his position, the knowledge of plots and scheming loomed up in his thoughts as something grown suddenly monstrous, no longer answerable to his cunning. He even felt old, and for several mad seconds wondered whether there was no escape from the foreboding future, where a complete renunciation of his customary life might save him. Yet there remained something too unyielding in him for that.

He did not stay long and he went home to spend a bad night. Many times in his dark room, silent save for the unmarked hum of clumsy, nocturnal insects, he tried to review his position clearly, and to perceive, in definite terms, what sudden new weakness could have come about to shake his assurance. He was unable to fix on anything, yet the conviction of insecurity persisted. The very fact that he could not grapple with the precise character of his alarm maddened him.

In the morning he arose earlier than usual and, although without appetite, walked into the dining-room by habit. Here he discovered his wife, joking with one of the maids, a little mulatto girl.

In his nervous condition the appearance and position of the woman outraged him profoundly. Her body was covered with a slovenly negligée, she wore a dingy sort of a cap on her head that flapped about like a pair of monstrous ears. In comparison, the little maid was neat—upon the entrance of the General she retired with hasty discretion.

Gonzales stood just inside the door, staring at his wife. He resented, as a personal affront, as a deliberate thrust at his position and dignity, this obscene familiarity with the servants. This morning, because of his feeling of insecurity, his sense of honour was the more acute.

His wife turned and met his eyes, but her glance wavered before the fixed animosity of his stare.

She stood up, attempting to ignore him, but he stepped toward her quickly and seized her arm.

Now, defensively, she raised her eyes, summoning the courage of a cornered animal to her aid.

For a moment he did not speak. In his anger his face coloured a darker hue. He had never felt more keenly the outrage life had brought him with this woman, the abominable shaft of fate that had joined him with her. In that moment, by an insane, emotional

syllogism, he connected her with his present perplexity; he blamed her for all his uncomprehended difficulties.

But before he could act or speak, she jerked her arm free and, running around the table, reached the door. He followed her, cursing; she slammed the door in his face.

For an instant he rattled the knob like a madman, but when it yielded to his clumsy efforts she was gone.

A moment later his daughter entered the room. He did not speak to her. All his family irritated him; no one of them understood his difficulties. They were useless ones, symbols of his undeserved misfortunes.

He lost all thought of the unnecessary breakfast, deciding now, with a swiftly acquired impulse to action, to call on the President. He scarcely knew what he would say, or how he would act, but perhaps Gomez would lighten the abominable darkness a little and give some rationality to the actions of Figueredo Paniagua.

He dressed carefully and then rode over to the *Casa Amarilla*, but Gomez was not there. He had already left for Miraflores, having concluded all his business for the day.

Gonzales felt his necessity so keenly that he determined on the drive over to the Palace, and even began to execute it, proceeding half way along the Candelaria before turning back. It was a strange, swift enervation that made him change his mind.

He felt that the trip was useless and that nothing was to be gained from Gomez. His emotions, intangible and without definite foundations, were almost those of one defeated, who, incapable of action, stolidly awaits the inevitable.

It was at this moment that he thought of his little Gloria, the quiet, comforting one, and the recollection of her entered his mind like a caress. He knew he must go and talk to her. The memory of her sweet naïvete enlivened his dull spirits. She believed in him, she honoured him, each of her shy glances

was a tribute to his strength. She would give him courage.

CHAPTER VI

ALMOST a day having passed since her coming to this little house, the girl found herself strangely happy and content. She was one unused to the environment of happiness, and so the charm of these moments came to her with a peculiar freshness of appeal.

Her recollections dealt only with days of sordid events. As far as she could remember, the spectre of the old woman haunted her, beating her whilst she was still a little girl, forcing her to tasks beyond her strength, and as she grew older and the flower of her charm unfolded, treating her no less harshly, but eyeing her now with an obscene and unmistakable expectation. Then followed those months of less and less veiled suggestion, culminated at last by direct commands. But she had been saved!

She was waiting eagerly now for the General's coming, whom, in her simplicity, she regarded as a fabulous one. But there was already a humanizing touch that made him real to her, that gave her the emotion of pity. His intimate monologue the day before had pictured his wife as the counterpart of her own haggish oppressor, a younger duplicate, but no less venomous. These thoughts made her flush with anger. How was it possible that such a man could be dishonoured!

Shortly after he had left her she had made the acquaintance of her neighbours and servants, old Pedro and his wife. She liked them at once; they treated her with consideration, and when the General's name was mentioned their faces became fully respectful.

Pedro's wife was a fat old woman, somewhat rheumatic, extremely garrulous, but full of motherly solicitations. But Gloria knew that Pedro was the more important of the two, and she liked him better.

He had a sinister aspect that pro-

claimed a great amount of ready courage and that did not frighten her at all. She trusted him, and she was assured of his loyalty to the General. She knew they had seen action together, and she felt that Pedro must have been fully adequate to the most perilous situation whenever personal valour could count. It was easy to imagine how terrifying he could be in anger; in his early days he must have dominated more than one scene by his mere physical presence.

He was a big fellow, a little bent now, but still commanding. He wore immoderate moustaches, half jet and half grey, and irregularly stained with tobacco. His walk was astonishingly light, almost feline; there was nothing stolid about him; he seemed to be always listening, to be cat-like, alert. But he had a gentle voice, and when he spoke to Gloria he removed his great hat respectfully.

In the morning little Gloria and Pedro's fat *señora* had gone down to Gradillos San Jacinto and with some of the money left the day before they had bought a score of feminine things that the old woman carried back with them, talking without intermission during the whole trip. The girl gave her only a perfunctory attention, but this silken chatter was not offensive; it made her feel at ease, indeed. She liked Pedro's wife.

As she dressed for the General's anticipated visit she felt wholly at ease; it seemed the normal thing that he was coming; she had already adapted herself to her good fortune. She was one who had never looked forward to a future, and so she had readily accepted the immediate moment. Even now she had no thoughts, nor speculated anything, upon any days to come. Life had not given her the habit of anticipations.

She put on a light blue frock and, walking out into the garden, pulled some orange blossoms and fastened them in her hair. Looking in the glass she was surprised at the composure of her face; the full, curiously shaped lips were smiling, her broad forehead was without

lines, the eyebrows were arched sharply over her large, half-slanting eyes that had already lost their brooding glints.

She was satisfied with her appearance. It did not occur to her to wonder whether or not she was intrinsically charming; the General would like her, she felt assured.

At last she heard his motor stop in front of the house and she ran to the door to meet him. He was frowning as he crossed the pavement, but as she took his hands, leading him eagerly into the little room, the lines dissolved from his features. Her welcome was warming; he was touched already by the atmosphere of her charm and sympathy.

"Look, *señor!*" she exclaimed. "Pedro and I have changed everything here. Isn't it pretty now? I'm very glad!"

"What have you done since yesterday?" he asked.

"Waited for you!" she said.

"Do you like it here?"

"Oh, I'm going to be really happy," she answered.

It was impossible to doubt her. Her simplicity was incapable of evasion, and she accepted the meagre gift of this place with an almost absurd delight. In his present mood her appreciation stirred him unusually and it lessened his sense of bitterness.

He sat down and began to talk to her. She sat close to him, touching him with her little hands, fingering his coat-collar, his sleeves, his necktie, occasionally smoothing her hand gently over his hair.

"I'm tired," he said. "I've been tired for months now, and for some reason worried, Glorina. Perhaps I'm getting to be an old man. No doubt that's the reason why I brought you here—I've been wondering about that. It may be I imagine that I can steal some of the secret of your youth."

"Don't come here to tell me that!" she exclaimed. "I'll give you anything I can, but you are not an old man, *señor!* You wouldn't let anybody say that but yourself!"

"Things grow harder for me," he went on. "I have many enemies—too many for an old man."

The girl straightened a little, and something communicated from this spontaneous gesture made him raise his eyes and meet her own. Her eyebrows were drawn down, their arch destroyed; the slantwise eyes had narrowed and her full lips were compressed. Under her dusky skin a fluctuant colour warmed her cheeks.

"I'll kill any one of them you say!" she exclaimed.

For a moment her ferocity surprised him. Then, seeing her small face, her rigid little body, her slim hands clenched ineffectually on her breast, he laughed. But he was pleased. Her words recalled some long-forgotten emotions, some old events, some of the valorous memories of his younger days. She had the spirit that had been common to all of them then, the old spirit . . . the forgotten spirit. . . .

"I believe you would!" he murmured.

Her words had been the solvent of his depression. He began to talk to her lightly, and presently they were both laughing. After a time they went outdoors to look at the orange trees, and here they found old Pedro, who joined them a few moments, spoke something about the badness of things and then discreetly disappeared.

Gonzales found that he was restless; the afternoon was unusually warm; he suggested that they get in the motor and drive up into the Avila. The girl was delighted with the prospect.

They took that little road that mounts and dips like a wave and descends at last into La Guayra. Just outside of the city they passed a pair of Assyrian peddlars, coming in with a pack from the seaport; Gonzales stopped the car and bought the girl one of those curious necklaces the natives make over in Trinidad. Further out, a train, going northward, passed across the face of a cliff beyond an intervening valley and was lost like a toy in the impenetrable green. They could hear its whistle,

sounding like the call of a far bird, from nowhere.

The girl was moved; she drew closer to Gonzales.

"Life is very big," she said, simply. "I don't know anything about it. I have never lived yet. You must teach me life!"

She met his eyes with a glance that confided her admiration and her dreams. She almost seemed pitiful then—and, after all, he thought, pity is not only for those who are old. She gave him a renewed sense of strength. In the atmosphere of her abounding faith he felt remote from all forebodings.

He no longer sought the explanation of his impulses toward her, he had no desire to rationalize the act that had carried her away from that sinister *Puerto de Hierro*. He accepted her; she was a necessary one.

Several hours passed rapidly and they had to turn back at last to reach the city before nightfall. When Gonzales parted from her that afternoon it was with a real regret. The enlivening hours remained with him for some time. It was not until later in the evening that his depression returned.

CHAPTER VII

FOR more than a month he saw her every day. The news of his presumed infatuation leaked out, of course, and he knew that some of his friends laughed at him; he was indifferent.

One day he overheard several of them talking of his affair.

"Who is she?" the speaker said. "Ha! one of those delightful ones from that row near El Valle station—you understand! No, I haven't seen her."

These allusions did not anger him; they even gave him a measure of pride. At least no one could claim he was entirely old. They believed the worst; that was excellent!

Of course, his wife found out, for no such thing is a secret very long in that city. It produced some improvement in her. It may have given her a certain fear. Her vulgarities were less obvious

and sometimes she was almost genial. As for his son and daughter, they made no sign. They were acquainted with the ways of their country.

Had it not been for his political difficulties, he would have been almost content in these days. But the intrigues that he felt were afoot still eluded him. Figueredo Paniagua was thoroughly obnoxious; as far as possible the General avoided him.

Sometimes, alone, he writhed despairingly at his own cowardice. In any moment he could make this man show his cards, whatever they were—he could go to Gomez and demand his removal. An open trial of strength would be bound to follow. Even Gomez, if he were indeed inimical, might hesitate, for the General felt that he was still to be feared. There were still many Gonzalistas; he was still a *caudillo*.

Yet he felt that the subtle insults of Paniagua, the contemptuous air of the man, were purposely designed to make him act; and so he was afraid and shrank from the issue. He temporized with his necessity, suffering the insolences of his subordinate under the persuasion that the moment to strike had not yet arrived.

But the very necessity of another conflict appalled him. He was tired and he felt old. Why could not things go on as they were, quietly? Nature would soon remove him from the path of the ambitious ones!

He had his instants of angry pride and the old strength seemed to return to him, but they were always neutralized by the coming back of his weak hesitation.

He was seldom at home now, for the sight of familiar things irritated him.

He even went less to his café, preferring to spend his evenings with the little Gloria. She always ministered to him, soothing his vanity, assuaging his pride. Her belief in him was entire; she never questioned his strength. The sincerity of her simple admiration warmed him. He felt a real tenderness for her. He persuaded himself that it was well to be with her, for he believed

that she would finally give him the full measure of resolution.

Gloria was still living in the moment, wholly content and very proud. Gonzales' position, his name, his honour, seemed almost a mystical thing, something precious, something worth giving a life for. These emotions were easy to her ardent simplicity.

She often talked about him to old Pedro. He told her of the early days, when they were both young, and had little to lose.

"Ha!" exclaimed Pedro, "he was a strong *caudillo* then! They were afraid of him!"

"They're afraid of him now!" interrupted the girl, her slanting eyes widely opened. "He has many enemies; he says so—but they're all afraid of him."

Pedro nodded abstractedly.

"They were afraid of him then," he went on, renewing the thread of his reminiscence, the valorous past. "I think he could have gone higher, *senorita*. They were all afraid of us. For example, *senorita* . . ."

The old man took off his enormous hat, resting it on his knee. It was twilight and the sun fell over his face, making red shadows in the deeply carven wrinkles. An old scar, dividing the edge of his chin, seemed to pulse a little in the last crimson light.

He lifted his face, staring westward toward El Calvario. His eyes fastened themselves upon the little chapel of the Virgin of Lourdes.

"That was the last fight we had to make," he said. "They sent old Don Miguel up against us and he had more than a thousand men with new rifles. It was hard with us: *Caramba!* how we all cursed! Don Gonzales swore he'd slit Don Miguel's throat, and all of us said the same; we thought it was just our manner of speaking. But the General meant *his* words, *senorita!*"

"Here is the way he did it: he sent for me in the night and we went down together to their camp. You squirmed up on your belly through a field of cane and the two sentinels were playing cards

at the edge of the clearing with a cane fire burning at the side. You'd see the smoke go across their faces like a cloud, and then their heads would show up again with their mouths grinning at each other.

"When the time came we hit them over their heads so that they never made much of a sound. My General took the blanket from one and wrapped it about him; he put on the fellow's hat and I waited. He went into the camp and all you could hear was little noises such as you expect in the night, *senorita*. Presently Don Gonzales came back and I could see that he was smiling. I knew that he had kept his word. After that, it wasn't long until they made peace with us . . ."

The old man's voice trailed off in a regretful cadence as if old dreams troubled him then, the sinister, appealing wraiths of unfulfilled adventures, of exploits that his memory would have prized, cut short by the struggle's unexpected end.

But the girl had no regrets, for she was already lost in the fervours of her imagination.

Her heart seemed to open widely to these past heroisms; the knowledge of them gave her a new life and obliterated for all time the unworthy memories of her other days. She walked in a different world now, she played a different rôle. For her, the deeds of the General in the past were still living things, continuing in the present—and she had her part in them.

Of course old Pedro's tales enhanced her hero and enlarged her tenderness for him. In these final days she charmed him immeasurably, serving his pride so completely that he almost lived in the atmosphere of a forgetful illusion. Her adequate tribute to his other days enabled him to forget the moment, to overlook his temporizing and his immediate weakness.

He ignored Figueredo Paniagua; he was really contemptuous of the man. He draped himself in the cloak of his past accomplishments, as if it were an

armour. He persuaded himself that he was strong enough to cope with any intrigue, but he did nothing.

Certain rumors were becoming common property now; some of his friends endeavored to warn him. It was pretty well known that Paniagua had easy access to Gomez these days, and the origin of General Gonzales' influence was recalled. His position was the result of an early compromise; he held it because he had been a strong *caudillo*. The interested ones could divine that Gomez had no reason to favor him if there were nothing more to fear from his strength. But he laughed at his advisors and the ease of his contempt reassured them.

One evening, with Gloria, he told her more than he ever had before about his present position, gilding its seriousness with his recently acquired contempt. She was troubled, but she laughed with him over the futility of his enemies.

"I intend to give Figueredo Paniagua a few more weeks," he said, "and then it will be better for him and four or five others to leave the city. I'm tired of waiting, little one. I'm about to act."

He stood in front of her, smiling.

In the dim light his erect figure had an air of youthful courage, and his words were wholly convincing. He believed them himself. He believed that he was about to show his hand; it seemed worth while now; he had gained a sweet audience.

She looked at him with all the fervour of her tender admiration. The faint light concealed the lines of his face, there were shadows that dyed his whitening hair, and her simple faith was supreme. She breathed quickly, seeing the glamorous, exciting days before her. She knew she would help him!

But her heart was not without its troubling fears. When he left her that evening she lingered at the door longer than usual, holding him with low spoken words and she watched until his car was out of sight and the dark street empty and noiseless. But just before she went indoors she was surprised to hear another car come up the street. It

passed with dimmed headlights, turned at the corner where he had turned, and again the thoroughfare was without sound.

It was not until late the next morning that she learned of his death.

CHAPTER VIII.

AFTER he left her he went first to *La Francia*. It was not recalled that he spent a long time in this place. They remembered, with a questionable significance, that a stranger had called for him there earlier in the evening, and had gone without waiting.

Early the next morning his body was found in the San Juan river; his car was deserted in the street.

There was a purple wound between his eyes, probably the result of a blow, and in his breast there were half a dozen knife thrusts.

The President issued a proclamation offering a reward for the perpetrators. In *La Francia* they laughed at that. It was generally conceded that no one would have dared this attempt without Gomez's consent.

Old Fernandez, speaking to a group there, had some very respected comments to make.

"Three months ago I warned him. Several weeks ago I told him it would be better either to act or leave the city. Better the last, no doubt. His work was done here—there comes a time when every man's work is finished. Then you can watch, it's better to watch anyway! Then you have the opportunity of observing the folly of action. But there was some sort of a woman, ah? All men after fifty should be required to enter a monastery."

Dr. Fernandez and three or four others went to his home, having a zestful curiosity. The younger men entered the house with countenances revealing a certain solemnity, but old Fernandez was faintly smiling. The incident had yielded him some agreeable meditations; his mind enjoyed the contemplating of futilities.

Somewhere in the house Virginia's parrot was calling persistently: "*Perichito, perichito, dami la pata, dami la pata!*"

The girl met the visitors and took them into the room where the General's body was lying. There was a crucifix at his head, and the lighted candles flickered in the dark room like symbols of frailty. The girl's face was tense; her customary abruptness was accentuated, but she showed no signs of extravagant grief.

In the room the silence was broken by the monotonous lamentations of the General's wife. Her obvious grief seemed natural now and the visitors, accustomed to the plastic souls of their people, regarded it without surprise.

She sat in a big chair, her elbows were supported on her knees, her face was hidden in her hands, and she rocked back and forth. The fluttering of her dress stirred the air near the candles and now and then they flickered violently.

Others began to come into the room and Dr. Fernandez and his party left. In the hall they met Ismael, the General's son. His face was very white, he looked a little frightened, save in the expression of his mouth, which was firm and seemed to indicate a half-formed determination. He beckoned to Fernandez and the two stood aside.

"What is it?" asked the old man.

The boy hesitated, finding his question difficult.

When he spoke he did not meet Fernandez's eyes, but gazed down morosely at the floor.

"What is your opinion, *senor doctor*?" he asked.

"I don't understand," replied Fernandez.

Ismael raised his face and his features expressed an emotion of distressful perplexity. There was a curious light of pleading in his eyes.

"I thought you might know, *senor doctor*," he said. "Who was it? Something is expected of me; I must do something!"

The old man regarded him with a

faint smile, that was not without its touch of compassion. He understood, in a measure, the conflict of emotions that assailed the boy's ease. He answered him gravely.

"I don't know," he replied. "Nobody knows. Your father had enemies; I think it's useless for you to do anything. You'd better try to forget."

Ismael lowered his face again but the look of relief that manifested itself on his features was not lost to the old man. He comprehended: the boy had desired this assurance and justification. Now he was freed from a terrifying responsibility. Nobody knew. It was useless to do anything. Nobody could be blamed for accepting the inevitable, for doing nothing. He took Dr. Fernandez's hand and pressed it gratefully.

"If I could find out—" he muttered.

Fernandez turned and rejoined his friends.

"The end of another drama," he remarked, "with ironies to make overtones to the central tragedy. The boy, having a certain amount of romance about him, was horribly afraid that he would be expected to accomplish some sort of a requital for the injury to his father's honour. I put him at ease, *senores*. What would be the use? I'm tired of romance. Let these people forget all about honour—it's a pretense that will do them harm. They have other pretenses that are safer, especially the excellent *senora*, eh?"

Old Fernandez laughed. He took one of his companions by the arm, and drew intimately close to him. As he spoke the others smiled, in appreciation of his drollery.

"We regret our friend's death," he said, "but consider what an admirable thing it is for his wife. I tell you, this life is full of compensations, balances. They had a holy time together; it was a stiff game between them; but now she forgets all that. It pleases her to believe that she has lost something and thereby she gains a very agreeable martyrdom—a touching circumstance, *caballeros!* That old lady has an agree-

able prospect for the rest of her days. It is her right now—you will not be heartless enough to deny it; none of us—to exact compassion and comfort and notice from all her acquaintances for her remaining years. She will wear melancholy like garb, like a luxurious garment. How excellent! How much more subtle and interesting than some romantic vengeance. We would not enjoy that. It would hurt our self-respect."

They all wandered back to *La Francia*, with the old doctor dominating the stage. His discourse was highly agreeable and it was admitted that he had never talked with greater finesse.

CHAPTER IX.

A LITTLE after noon the girl Gloria was in the garden when old Pedro brought her the news. There was a little *kiosco*, painted a fresh green in that place, and the girl was sitting here, placidly, almost without thought, in pleasant communion with the peaceful silence. Several tall palms stood near like tireless sentinels. She was looking out toward the purpled ridges of the Avila, and now and then her sight was faintly blurred by the coming and going of a school of gnats, passing back and forth in front of her eyes, like the fluttering of a diaphanous veil.

She heard the gate open and knew from the light, deliberate tread that Pedro had come in. She gave no thought to his presence, not even turning to look at him.

In a moment she saw him walking along the path, approaching her. She raised her eyes and smiled; and then, seeing his face, the smile vanished.

It was obvious that some profound trouble had come to him, altering his entire aspect. The stoop of his tall body was accentuated, his arms seemed to dangle without life at his sides. His face was bent, crisscrossed by numberless lines, and the immoderate moustaches drooped as if they had withered on his lip.

At once the girl was assailed by a grave premonition, and uncomprehended portent that brought an acute expression of alarm to her face.

She began to tremble a little; it was impossible to sit quietly; she stood up and stared at old Pedro intently.

"*Que te passa!*" she demanded.

The old man's gaze met hers, but his eyes did not appear to mirror her image; there was a hopeless dumbness in them, that, in the extremity of some inward devastation, made sight itself a useless effort. He opened his lips and spoke very low.

"We were all too old," he said. "They were too strong for us at last. I didn't even suspect. They've killed him; we've seen him for the last time."

The words, for all their tone of abundant sorrow, implied also a deep resignation, an acknowledgment of inevitable defeat.

"We were too old," he repeated. "We were too old . . ."

The girl had not moved; she still stared at the old man and she understood his words fully.

In this instant of unwarned revelation, into the complexity of her emotions there entered a strange, accusing bitterness. Certain remembered incidents came back to her, unheeded in the seconds of their enactment—but now she realized that she should have foreseen.

He had spoken so often of his enemies and come to her so frequently with that countenance of worry and depression. How futile she had been! A useless one—and she could have saved him!

But her mind had too great a simplicity to hold for many moments any complexity of thought. In a few seconds only an overwhelming anger remained, a rage that was cunning in its supreme naïvete. She knew none of the circumstances of his death, nor needed to know them now. It sufficed that a hidden hand had waited for him and struck the dishonouring blow. He was gone—but his honour remained, in her hands, for her justification, for her full cherish-

ing. Whatever his death had taken from her—his saving kindness, the new life, the forgetfulness of former degradations—it had not deprived her of this most precious legacy.

She was no longer trembling. Her simple emotion had made her immeasurably strong. She saw only one aim before her, a single goal. The power of her illusion beat in her veins, bounded maddeningly at her wrists. It almost swept the pathos from her small, erect figure, giving her the false, convincing aspect of one whose illusive belief becomes, by the strength of faith, a truth.

Old Pedro stood as before, staring down at the ground in helpless immobility. Many times in the past, listening to his reminiscences of valorous other days, she had found him almost heroic. But now, without question, she understood that *she* was the dominant one.

She stepped toward him, raised her hand, and gripped his arm.

"We have *our* part to do now," she said.

She gazed into his face and he met her eyes.

His glance still held its dumb hopelessness—he did not understand.

For a moment she was irritated; he was an old man; she felt a swift anger at the mere fact of his useless age. The emotion passed and she still retained his arm.

"Don't you understand?"

"What do you mean, *senorita*?"

She held his eyes with the fervour of her own, summoning all her determination to arouse him, to make him see.

"You must do what I say!" she said.

He stared at her face and a new expression came into his features, a yielding one.

Without comprehending, the detached power of her simple purpose dominated him. He waited for her words.

"You see?" she asked. "You must do everything I say!"

He slowly nodded his head and at this sign of his acquiescence a faint, bitter smile curved on her lips. She released his arm and her glance dropped as her

face became thoughtful. Freed from the spell of her glowing eyes, something of Pedro's sorrowful helplessness returned and in the manner of a soliloquy he began to speak.

"I was almost a boy when I met with him, *senorita*," he said. "We were all young then, Don Gonzales and I and the rest of us and we loved no one so well as our enemies, because when you are young your enemies are the zest of your life. They were the zest of men like us, *senorita*. Ah, the chances we could take then, when we were young, when Don Gonzales and I and the rest of us were all young together! And we had nothing to lose; we had nothing but our hopes! You can't lose your hopes when you're young! We had our nights and days together and our dreams; the wild things we did! For every friend we made ten enemies—it didn't matter, the young ones were our friends and only the old whom we despised were our enemies. Of course, and we were strong when we had nothing to lose. We never thought of it—it was a long time ahead before we'd be old . . ."

She paid no heed to his words, for reminiscences meant nothing to her now. For her there was no past, no past of anyone, not even her own, but only the overmastering necessity of the present. Once more she seized old Pedro's arm, bringing her uplifted face close under his eyes.

"Hear me, Pedro," she said. "You must know something; you are the only one. Think now, very carefully: who killed him? You can tell, you can guess! Maybe you suspect seven, twelve men; tell me about each one of them. What does it matter to us that maybe only one killed him; tell me ten names; that will make sure of the one!"

Old Pedro looked down at the girl, staring into her intent, motionless face, and the change in his mood was reflected in his own face. Some of her savage ardour, her simple purpose, seemed to transpire into his blood, renewing his strength.

He began to understand her and be-

cause, like herself, he too was a simple one, he found nothing futile in the fervour of her purpose. His head dropped a little in a curious gesture of contrition.

"Forgive me, *senorita*," he murmured. "I forgot that at least you were young."

CHAPTER X.

THE old man asked her for a day or two to consider and investigate.

"We must count in Figueredo Paniagua as the bad genius," he said. "But I must watch him and study his friends. It will be well to include them all, his intimates; we don't know; we can't be sure."

In the evenings he appeared outside the cafés, standing in the shadows, walking slowly before the doors.

He waited near *La Francia*, *La Iberia*, and down the plaza below the *Panaderia*; he haunted *La España*.

He watched Figueredo Paniagua and noted his friends, the ones who were with him repeatedly, the intimates.

Once he followed the General to Miraflores, and when he returned took special note of the men with whom he drank that night. This was a pleasant work; he made a sinister figure in the Plaza.

Meanwhile the girl waited in the little house, her thoughts dwelling only on her purpose.

That other past, the time before she met him, was gone from her memories, a trivial and degrading thing. Her life, it seemed to her, had begun with him, revealing every significance, and presently, with the fulfillment of his honor that remained in her sole keeping, it would end.

She often sat in the garden, watching the Avila, and waiting. In a measure, her physical frailty was scarcely apparent now, for the strength of her illusion had dignified her. She was like one exalted by brave, false dreams. It was her fortune and her fate to have no doubts, to accept her aim with an absolute faith and a certainty of its abounding justification. Perhaps she was a

little enviable now, with the courage of belief.

Because she never even questioned herself, she presented in these days an aspect reminiscent of mystery.

Often old Pedro's wife came in and talked to her; the old woman's eyes were red and her garrulity was unchecked. She talked of Gonzales incessantly; the murmur of her gentle, monotonous voice rather pleased the girl.

Then, one morning, Pedro made his report and they spoke together for a long time.

"We can never be sure," he told her, "but it must have been one of the four or five; that's my best opinion, *señorita*. You find them always together, they meet in the evening, they form their own group, they are very confidential."

"Only five?"

"It seems no more than that, although you can't be sure. We'll never be sure. And after they've drunk together Paniagua often takes them with him, the three or four of them and himself, and they go to his house, and later he comes to the door and they stand there laughing a while before they say good night."

The girl smiled.

"A good thing for us."

"Yes, a convenient custom."

Pedro nodded his head vigorously in confirmation of his belief, and his ponderous moustaches swayed rhythmically on his lip. He waited for the girl to speak.

A deep color had come into her cheeks; her head was tilted back and a pulsation was visible at the sides of her slender throat. Her hands were tensed in her lap; her eyes stared into the distance as if, far on the ridges of the green and purple mountains, she discerned a significant vision, unseen in the inadequacy of common sight.

All the mystery of her simple ardour was apparent then, but not explained. And the old man who watched sought no explanation, for he was as unquestioning as herself. He accepted her then, and believed in her.

She lowered her face; she met his eyes.

"We'll go there to-night," she said.

CHAPTER XI.

IN that tropical city, however warm the days, a cool air blows in after night-fall, coming over from El Valvario and the picturesque ranges of the Avila. It is a sea-breeze, that, blowing south, has gathered to itself the tang of tropical forests, and, to the imaginative, a romantic portent. The city, a sinister gem set in the magnificent grasp of the mountains, receives it as a phenomenon that lends character. It blows suggestively through the streets, rationalizing the improbable, expressive of the people to whom it comes, a symbol alike of subtle feeling and passionate emotion.

Now, as usual, it was cool, and Pedro wore an old cloak and loomed enormous at the side of the girl. Yet, even now, in the concealing darkness, he did not dominate her. His head was inclined in order to listen for any word, and in the bending of the great body there was an expression of his dependence and submission.

That night she had all the necessary qualities of one who is the leader in an improbable adventure. Her thoughts were without complexity, being fixed on a single aim. She did not weaken her case with doubts—the doubts that a touch of pity might have given her, or fear, or lack of faith. Her illusion was supreme and secure and so she was without faltering.

She loitered in the Plaza on the outskirts of a crowd that had gathered to hear the band. They were playing dance music, but she was little used to irony and the triviality of it did not make her smile. Meanwhile Pedro was visiting all the favorite places and when he returned to her he had located, at the *Iberia*, the ones they sought.

"We don't know," he said, "but it is probable they will come at the usual time. Let us go and wait."

She nodded in agreement and they

passed around the Archbishop's palace and into San Juan. They were silent, for to neither was there any necessity of speech.

General Figueredo Paniagua's house had the distinction of being set back from the street. It did not come down familiarly to the pavement, but unlike most of the homes, even those of the better class, it had grounds in front, terraced with palms and shrubbery.

When they reached this goal Pedro looked up and down the street cautiously; no one seemed near or watching, so the two ran up the embankment of the terrace, and, choosing a clump of shrubs that bordered the walk, secluded themselves there.

It was not safe to talk nor did they have anything that needed saying. Pedro sat down, squatting like an Indian; for a time the girl remained standing, her body crouched a little and she peered through the bushes at the street.

Now and then they would hear footsteps; in the excitement her body would grow tense, although it was too early for their group and she did not expect them in this way. Pedro never moved; his figure maintained a sculpturesque immobility.

At last the girl tired and she knelt on the grass beside the old man.

Through an opening in the leaves she could see the houses across the street. Some of the windows were still lighted and in one of them a woman was singing a love song. The voice was light but in the stillness of the thoroughfare it came clearly to their ears and they could hear the plaint of the words.

"Tu faz hermosa . . ."

For the first time since the legacy of honour had come into her keeping, memories returned to Gloria. The tender words aroused her to wantings, to desires unfulfilled. Then the voice stopped; there was silence again; window by window the lights in the houses disappeared.

It was very quiet now for there was

only the blundering sound of heavy insects taking wing and the stir of their obscure bodies in the grass.

Afterward she never remembered all the details of the adventure clearly.

For some reason, perhaps from the tenseness resulting from their long watch, they both acted prematurely, and not according to their plan.

It had been agreed in this way: if the General came alone they would dispose of him at once, otherwise no opportunity would come again that night. But if he came with his friends they would let them pass, creeping up to the porch and waiting until they reappeared, for the reason that all these men would be more helpless later.

It did not happen as they had proposed.

They saw the General alight from his car and there were three others with him. They were all laughing; someone was telling a story. The voice, announcing the denouement was very clear.

"The gentleman congratulated the mother," he said, "and remarked: 'A fine child; an unusual family resemblance. You could never mistake him—he looks just like *el amigo de su padre!*'"

They laughed again, and following Paniagua, came walking along the path.

Both the girl and old Pedro arose swiftly, crouching under the cover of the shrubbery and when they fired two of Paniagua's friends fell. That was a fortunate shot.

Then Pedro sprang out from behind the cover and General Figueredo Paniagua was amazingly swift. It was astonishing how well he met this last and direst of his emergencies. In the single instant elapsing between the double report and Pedro's savage emergence he had learned the direction of the attack and instinctively withdrawn the little jewelled weapon always in his pocket. There was no time for anything more.

Pedro's cloak swirled out from his

body like the spread of sable wings. Both men fired in the same instant. The shots echoed across the lawn, it was still again, and the two men were erect, staring at each other through the darkness. The General was the first to fall; he toppled over very suddenly and sprawled on his face.

Old Pedro was still standing and in his immobility there was something sinisterly contemptuous, for he did not turn his face to the remaining adversary, but, as if lost in meditation, looked over the form of the fallen *caudillo*, not even deigning the inclination of his head.

Gloria called to him; the other man turned sharply at the astonishing sound of a woman's voice; he saw her emerge cat-like from the bushes and he was blinded by the repeated flash of her revolver. He fell sideways, cursing obscenely.

Then, before she could reach his side, Gloria observed Pedro sink to his knees, remaining a moment as if in an attitude of prayer. She ran toward him and his body flexed into her arms. She peered into his face; the eyes were closed; the mouth had dropped open; he was not breathing.

For a second, summoning all the strength of her determination, she held him thus, watching his face. At last she bent closer and as a tribute to his simple and unquestioning valour, she touched his lips with her own.

Now she raised her head, looking across the lawn toward the house.

Someone opened the door and she saw the shadow of a head peering out cautiously.

She drew away softly, creeping through the grass and when she was behind the shrubbery again, she ran the length of the walk and reached the street.

Lights were appearing in the windows of the other houses, but the street was still empty.

She ran to the next corner and turned. If anyone saw her, it was too late to follow.

THE GUARDIAN OF HONOUR

CHAPTER XII.

IN the morning, with her purpose achieved, a profound lethargy had come into her spirits. Her first gladness had been superseded by a deep melancholy, almost a regret; it seemed to her that she had come to the end, the end of all significances—and henceforth she was useless.

But later in the day, little by little, she felt the appropriateness of a final ceremonial. It was then, for the first time, that she thought definitely of Pedro and regretted that he could not go with her.

She shrouded herself in the familiar mantilla that had hidden her face on the day of their first rendezvous. It was a long walk, but she was indifferent to the distance. When she reached the boulevard she turned westward and the afternoon was far advanced when she came to the cemetery.

She walked to the fresh grave and stood looking down at the yellow earth. It was still unmarked, but there was the dignity of the other stones about it, bearing the name of his family. She read the familiar syllables—*Gonzales*—and a surge of pride returned. Unrecognized and unknown, her own obscurity had taken on now a measure of this name's glamour, and she had been the guardian of its honour.

Presently she heard footsteps in the gravel path and turning she saw two women approaching. One was young; the other, middle-aged, leaned upon her arm. As Gloria watched she saw the older woman take out a handkerchief and touch the moisture of tears from her face.

The two were close now and seeing

the girl standing over the grave they stopped and stared at her. Suddenly Gloria knew them: this was his daughter and his wife.

She saw the tears in the wife's eyes and despite their fundamental insincerity, they produced, within her, an acute depression. The daughter was frowning; the eyes of the two girls met and to both there came a mutual recognition. The countenance of Gonzales's daughter became clouded with the commingled emotions of anger, and contempt. The wife still dabbed her tear-stained face.

Now, for the first time, Gloria achieved a flash of insight, and comprehended the measure of her futility. Looking at the wife she knew a touch of life's ironic conditions. This other woman, the one with *his* name, had alone the right to tears, the permission of public sorrow, and she, however faithfully she had fulfilled a secret trust, was the ignored and contemptuous one.

The young girl was still frowning and Gloria, turning abruptly, walked away. The others took her place.

She did not look back, but passed slowly among the dead, like one of them. And, indeed, there was a kinship, for she had come to the end. She had no thoughts of her future, for without contemplation she understood its terms.

It was time now to return to the place where her great man had found her; the old woman would receive her. She was too indifferent to be appalled at the prospect of her degradation.

But life, at least, relenting or forgetful, had left her her illusion: dishonoured, she would still remember a significance in the name of honour!

The End.



Raison D'Etre

By T. F. Mitchell

THE longevity convention was in session. No delegate was present under ninety. Naturally, discussion arose as to the reason for the piled-up years.

"Drinking causes early death," said one member. "Look at me. I am ninety-six because I never drank a drop!"

"Bosh," said a second. "Smoking is

the early killer! I have never touched tobacco."

"I have lived so long because I Fletcherized," said a third.

And so on.

One man did not speak.

"What reason can you advance?" they asked of him.

He waved his hand disparagingly.

"You are all bachelors," he said. "So am I."



If I Could But Remember

By Glenn Ward Dresbach

IF I could but remember
Why I loved you then,
I would try to love you
Madly once again.

Was it for your kisses,
Or a look or song?
With such vague remembrance
Dare Love tarry long?

Love, like young Narcissus,
Simple, dreaming elf,
May look in a pool of dreams—
And come to love himself!

If I could but remember—
Then I might forget
How another lady
Clings, and loves me yet!

Literature

By J. L. Morgan

I

"THE Library Committee will please come to order," said Judge Hawper, tapping noiselessly on the table with the rubber tip of his pencil.

He was a fat man, benign and spectacled. Now he tilted his head back, holding his jaws slightly ajar, a mannerism peculiarly his own, and gazed expectantly at the other two members of the committee, Mr. Ed. Hutchinson and "Doc" Pickett.

"Come to order, gentlemen!"

There was a great deal to be accomplished. The club was soon to move into its new home and committees of various sorts were all hard at work. There were many of them, and during their meetings at various times and places throughout the building loud, and sometimes angry, voices could be heard through the closed doors.

For instance, the Building Committee, after a year of wrangling with contractors and supply men, threatened to resign in a body when certain unconfirmed rumours were circulated—and they bobbed up about once a week—that its members were not faring badly by virtue of their office and authority. The Furnishing Committee denied with hot indignation that the wives of its members had received gifts of mahogany sideboards and Turkish rugs from a certain wholesaler of furniture. The Membership Committee offered a reward for the name of the scoundrel who had hinted that it was "approachable."

There were vague and untraceable rumours concerning other committees,

as in all well-regulated clubs, but so far the Library Committee had come through scathless. To date, in fact, it had never met.

"The first order of business," said the Judge, "will be to hear a report from Dr. Pickett on the status of the present library, the number of volumes and names of the same. This, I believe, will give us a broad and comprehensive general idea of what we now have. It will serve as a foundation, as it were."

The Judge weighed in the neighborhood of three hundred pounds and was verbose in proportion.

"And on this," he continued, "we will build and expand, always with proper care and caution as to the duplication of volumes, so that the result as a whole will not only be a credit to the club, but a place in which the members can enjoy a quiet and restful hour among the classics or wander in the fanciful fields of fiction." Dr. Pickett will now read his report."

Dr. Pickett, without undue ceremony, got to his feet, jerked a soiled envelope from his pocket, and from a penciled memorandum read:

"Upon investigation I find that the club library at this date consists of one complete set for the year 1896 of the 'United States Agricultural Reports'; one copy of 'Thirty Years in Congress,' by James G. Blaine; one copy of 'Science and Health,' by Mary Baker Eddy; and one copy, two hundred pages missing, of the 'World Almanac for 1904.'"

He finished abruptly and sat down. For just an instant the Judge seemed staggered, but only for an instant.

"The books which the Doctor has so kindly catalogued, gentlemen," he began, "cover a wide field, but, I may say, not exhaustively. Fortunately, in the selection of additional volumes, the report gives the committee great latitude. We are hampered by neither policy nor tradition. I regard the report as an excellent one, and I here express my approval and thanks to the Doctor for his patient labour in compiling it. We will now listen to suggestions on the acquisition of additional works, preferably of more modern authors."

"I move," said Mr. Hutchinson, who had prepared for the occasion and was somewhat eager to exhibit his literary knowledge, "that we get Dr. Eliot's Five-Foot Library."

"Only five feet!" snorted Dr. Pickett, looking at the tiers of shelves, empty of all but dust since the founding of the club. "Five feet is not a patchin'! Get five *hundred* feet! This room is big enough, God knows, but the library in the new building is forty by eighty. What kind of a showing, I ask you, would five feet of books make?"

The doctor had never read a book in his life, barring a few medical works, and he had been put on the committee only at the suggestion of Mr. Hutchinson, who was actuated by a purely outside motive.

That the doctor was the head of a large hospital was a significant fact to Hutchinson; and that the hospital had stores in which were a number of barrels labeled *Spiritus Frumenti* was an even more significant fact; and, finally, that the doctor was known at times to carry a sample from the aforesaid barrels was fraught with the deepest significance and possibilities to Mr. Hutchinson. For, truth to tell, Mr. Hutchinson loved his toddy. Even to speak of it, however remotely, in his presence was to see his jugular bulge over his collar and his face go crimson with pleasurable expectation.

"The 'Five-Foot Library,' gentlemen," said Hawper, "will be only a nu-

cleus, but it is a splendid suggestion and it does great honour to our fellow-member, Mr. Hutchinson, who, it is plain to see, has given the matter profound thought. Are there any more suggestions?"

Dr. Pickett pulled from his pocket a scrap of paper.

"I'd like to have the club buy O'Houlihan's 'Alimentary Canal,'" he said. "It's about twelve feet long and will make a bully showing, bound in red. It comes in forty volumes, is illustrated in color, and can be had for two hundred and eighteen dollars, net."

Judge Hawper caught his breath. He did not purpose that the doctor should establish a medical library at club expense; and, besides, he had an idea of his own.

"Hardly a work of general interest, Doctor," he said. "And I doubt that there is a set in the city."

"I've got a set the club could have," contended the doctor. "It's as good as new—and, for cash, I'll throw in a copy of Snodfish's 'Obstetrics.'"

"We'll consider it, Doctor, we'll consider it," said Hawper smoothly. "Personally, however, I believe that as a reference work Blodgett's 'Federal Statutes, Annotated,' would be preferable."

"Suppose," interposed Mr. Hutchinson, somewhat fearful of friction, "we see what returns there were to the circular letter asking for donations."

"A good idea," said Hawper, grasping the opportunity to sidetrack Pickett.

He summoned a bellboy, who, dispatched to the office, returned a few minutes later with a number of parcels wrapped in newspaper. These, when opened, proved to be books generously donated by members.

As Hutchinson read the titles the Judge made penciled notations. They were: "Uncle Tom's Cabin," Stowe (covers missing); "The Eyes of the World," Wright; the Memoirs of Gen. U. S. Grant in three volumes (Vols. I and III missing); "I, Mary McLane," by Herself; "History of Crawford County, Wis." (1878);

"Lovers Once, But Strangers Now," Bertha M. Clay; a City Directory (1901); "Harry and Lucy," Edgeworth; "Jesse James's Last Shot" (paper); a copy of the acts of the Ohio legislature for the year 1888, and a complete file of the *Prairie du Chien Courier*, 1848-1896.

All were in a rather dilapidated condition, but each in turn received its meed of praise from the Judge, together with sundry observations of a literary nature.

"The returns, gentlemen," he said, "are encouraging, but—eh—rather limited. We will get out a second letter, laying greater stress on the club necessity. Now, to go back to the matter of purchases, I have made a few selections myself. I strongly urge the acquisition of the 'Novum Organum,' gentlemen. A splendid work indeed, and one that you will all enjoy very much. Also there is 'Discours sur la Methode,' by the immortal Descartes. Spinoza's 'Tractus Theologico-Politicus' is another work of supreme merit which I—"

"Let's get that 'Four Horsemen of the Acropolis,'" interrupted Hutchinson, yawning. "Everybody's readin' it."

"I will make a note of the horse book," said the Judge, scribbling the name on a piece of paper. "It will no doubt please some of our racing members. Now what else?"

"Put down 'The Life of Buffalo Bill,'" said the doctor. "It's great."

"Ah, one of the moderns," remarked the Judge. "Who wrote it?"

"Fenimore Cooper," replied Pickett. "He did a good deal of western stuff."

"Pardon me, Doctor, but wasn't it Owen Wister?" inquired Mr. Hutchinson, wrinkling his brow in great apparent concentration.

"Not a bit of it," returned the doctor stoutly. "Wister was the fellow who went out to Santa Fe, Arizona, and wrote 'Ben Hur.'"

"Gentlemen," mildly protested the chairman, "I believe you both in er-

ror. 'Ben Hur' was written by Lew—by Lew Fields."

"Now was it Lew Fields or Lew Dockstader?" interrogated Pickett sharply.

"It was the Indiana poet without a doubt," said the Judge. "But let us proceed. Our time is limited."

"Well, I guess you're right," reluctantly admitted the doctor. I got it mixed up with 'Ben Bolt.'"

"Are there any more suggestions, gentlemen?" inquired Hawper.

Hutchinson, who had been idly fingering one of the donated volumes, now suddenly gave vent to an epithet.

"What do you think of that!" he exclaimed, holding up the work of Bertha M. Clay, open at the fly leaf. "Here it says, 'Donated to the Club with the compliments of Clyde W. Stuggens.' I loaned that book to Stuggens three years ago, and you can see right here where he has scratched my name out and written his in. What do you think of that for nerve?"

"It don't surprise me," said Pickett. "I was out to his house one night and I saw thousands of 'em. Now, how did he get 'em, I ask you?"

"Gentlemen, gentlemen," protested the chairman, tapping the table with his rubber-tipped pencil, "let us have order! We must confine ourselves to the business in hand."

"Well," grumbled Hutchinson, "I'd like to give away my own books. And speaking of Stuggens, I remember now that last month he borrowed a bottle of gin from me and he's never even mentioned it since."

"It don't surprise me," iterated Pickett.

"And speaking of licker, Doctor," continued Hutchinson, suddenly brightening, "you don't happen to have a little something on your hip this evening, do you?"

The Doctor, a denial on his lips, shot his hand to his rear pocket with Bill Hart swiftness. His fingers discovered, however, that his coat had slipped up, revealing to Hutchinson's sharp

eyes the pint of "Old Buzzard" that he habitually carried.

"I was taking this out to a patient," he said, "a very, very sick man. But," he reluctantly conceded, "we might have a little nip out of it."

"Good ole Doc!" exclaimed Hutchinson fervently, at the same time reaching for the bottle. "You're a true friend!"

There was a glass and a pitcher of ice-water on the table, but these adjuncts Mr. Hutchinson scorned. Raising the pint heavenward, he shot through it a stream of bubbles resembling with great fidelity the death throes of an expiring U-boat. A wail went up from the Doctor, but Judge Hawper, startled at the sudden appearance of the pint and its equally sudden disappearance down the Hutchinson gullet, was too dazed for utterance.

"Prime stuff, Doc, prime stuff!" ejaculated Hutchinson, handing over the bottle with evident reluctance. "I like it."

"So it seems," said Pickett acidly, surveying the few jiggers remaining and at the same time making a calculation as to how much the Judge would, with common decency, allow him to pour. Sullenly he reached for the glass and began to pour a tiny stream. "Say when, Judge."

"Well, now, gentlemen," began the Judge, watching the stream with interest—and which even as he spoke became visibly smaller—"this is rather unexpected. But I would say that for that reason it is all the more enjoyable. It is the unexpected things of this world, gentlemen, that make life's journey tolerable. I remember an anecdote told by Chief Justice John Marshall that illustrates this point very well."

The Judge spoke with unusual deliberation as he noticed that the stream had now become a matter of drops.

"At a banquet in the city of Baltimore, Justice Marshall, in responding to a toast, said—"

"Here you are, Judge," interrupted Pickett, not waiting for the talismanic word. "Drink it and give me the glass."

Abandoning at once the immortal utterance of the Chief Justice, the Judge took the proffered tumbler and held it up to the light.

"As clear as amber and as beautiful as moonlight," he said, dreamily contemplating the liquor. "If, my colleagues, the bubbles in champagne are the imprisoned laughter of the peasant girls of France, may I not say, to use a like figure of speech, that from the sun-kissed hills of Kentucky comes—"

"The glass, Judge, the glass!" demanded Pickett impatiently. "Drink it, for God's sake, and give me the glass!"

Standing to the leeward of Mr. Hutchinson, who, breathing heavily, now exhaled an atmosphere of great alcoholic density, made the Doctor slightly dizzy.

Thus commanded, the Judge tossed off his liquor neat and without further comment other than a clicking of his tongue in testimony of his enjoyment.

A great peace had settled on Mr. Hutchinson.

"Doc," he said, "that was a mighty fine piece of goods. Mighty fine! It has given me a most inexpressible sense of calm and quiet content. I feel like Gray's 'Elegy in a Country Churchyard.' I feel like an old English landscape. I can see the cows standing placidly in the quiet pools, and over the crumbling old church spire in the distance the rooks are circling. In the foreground the velvety sward of old England—"

"To hell with England!" broke out Pickett, in sudden and unexpected fury.

The Doctor was Irish and violently partisan, a fact that his fellow committeeman had momentarily forgotten.

"The question is—are you going to let me drink this drink, or ain't you?"

In the heat of his passion he put down his glass, only to snatch it up again as he saw Mr. Hutchinson's fingers edging along the table.

"And what's more," he said, glaring at Hutchinson, "is that—since you've dragged politics into this literary matter—that is to say, considering the atti-

tude of England toward the free and glorious Irish Republic, I move that all English magazines, periodicals and publications be excluded from this club."

Mr. Hutchinson, considerably jolted out of his boasted tranquillity by the Doctor's tirade, and, moreover, with the knowledge that the Doctor's meagre pint was exhausted, was moved to irony.

"A splendid idea!" he said. "And I move to amend the motion to the effect that no printed matter of any kind be permitted in this institution save that published in the Gaelic language."

"Gentlemen!" exclaimed Judge Hawper, pounding with noiseless severity with his rubber-tipped pencil. "You are both out of order. This is no time or place to air personal prejudices—although," he added, with a thought of the solid Irish vote, "England has acted very badly in the matter."

At this moment there was a fortunate interruption by a bellboy, who entered bearing a communication from the elderly and letter-writing Mr. Abner McNabb. It was addressed to the Library Committee, and when opened was found to contain a violent denunciation of certain members, names given, who were accused of snoring in the reading room—all to the vast injury, annoyance and discomfort of the writer. In a postscript Mr. McNabb, being of a peculiar religious belief, demanded that the following periodicals be kept on file: *The American Spiritualist*, *The Cedar Rapids (Ia.) Methodist*, *The Christian Science Monitor* and the *New Thought Review*. This communication suffered the usual fate of letters from Mr. McNabb; that is to say, it was deposited in the wastebasket without comment.

II

THE intrusion of the epistle brought a lull in the proceedings, during which Mr. Hutchinson roused himself to inquire into the possibility of getting another drink. He looked long and steadily at Hawper.

"Judge, you don't happen to have anything, do you?" he asked.

"Well, gentlemen, I—ahem—may have a little something in my locker downstairs—some rum, in fact. The authorities have, I may say, clamped the lid on very tightly, gentlemen, and it is most difficult to purchase anything. Only yesterday was I fortunate enough to ascertain from the colored boy in the barbershop that he was in a somewhat clandestine correspondence with his brother, who, he informs me, is the owner of a large plantation on the island of Jamaica. He had Jamaica rum, Jamaica ginger, some lemon extract, and a dozen bottles of horse liniment which he says has a very high alcoholic content. I bought the rum—four bottles. I'll go get one."

"Bully!" exclaimed Mr. Hutchinson. "Sam tried to sell me that rum, but he wanted sixteen dollars a bottle. However, it is just as well, for I would have deprived you of it, Judge."

During the long five minutes that Hawper was absent, Mr. Hutchinson drummed his fingers restlessly on the table.

"Doc," he said, after a thoughtful pause, "I'm going to do you a good turn. Now listen. If you want to buy a case of good two-year-old rye, just drop a hint to the grill-room waiter, Herman Niemeyer. He knows where there is a case to be had at eighty plunks. The doorman can put you on to nine bottles of gin; the head barber has got five bottles of brandy hid out somewhere; and the hat boy says his uncle has got a barrel of cider that'll knock your back teeth out."

"Thanks," said the Doctor dryly. "Are you out of the market?"

"Who? Me? Oh, I'm going in for beer. Bought a recipe the other day—I'll make a copy of it and send it to you."

"I'd rather have some of the product," said Pickett, pointedly.

Mr. Hutchinson was spared further confusion by the entrance of the Judge with a black, square-necked bottle. From his ample pockets he produced

two glasses, which he had stolen somewhere on the floor below, and into these and into the third glass on the table he poured a thick, darkish liquid.

"It looks like glue," said Mr. Hutchinson, sniffing into his glass.

It was villainous-tasting stuff, but they drank it—and another—and another.

"I'll tell the world there's no old landscape in this stuff," commented Mr. Hutchinson. "I feel like a buzzsaw—like a wildcat walking on flypaper—like a—"

"I saw Dumbeck downstairs," interrupted the Judge. "He says he'll be up in a minute and that he's got something to say."

"I hope that he's also got something to drink," said Mr. Hutchinson, forgetting his other emotions. "This here sorghum is awful!"

Mr. Hutchinson had hardly spoken before the door opened and the club president came bustling into the room in his usual brisk manner. He wasted no time on preliminaries.

"Gentlemen," he said, "this morning I learned from the secretary that there have been ninety-one resignations from the club in the past week. At that rate it will only be a matter of two or three months before the club roster becomes entirely blank. This is a matter of supreme importance, and I am asking every committee to give it its undivided attention. We must devise some way of stopping this exodus. To speak plainly, gentlemen, if something is not done at once, we will never move into the new building."

This was news indeed! A bolt out of the blue! The committee stared at President Dumbeck and Dumbeck stared back at the committee. For a time no one spoke, the unexpected tidings having fallen on them like a wet blanket.

"What seems to be the matter?" inquired the Doctor.

The club president was a business man, accustomed to meeting problems in his own large affairs, and he had a logical explanation.

"Briefly," he said, "the fault seems to be that we are out of lockers. The grill-room is filled from floor to ceiling and there's no room for more.

"When the lid went on this summer," he continued, "we had about a thousand members. At that time over nine hundred of them gave it out that they would 'go down with the ship.' In other words, they claimed to be converted to Prohibition. For the remaining members we had lockers built, being advised by our attorneys that this could be legally done. But, gentlemen, there has in the last few months been a remarkable change in sentiment. Applications for more lockers poured in on us from day to day until the walls of the grill-room are lined with them—and we have demands for about five hundred more—and no place to put them. Meantime, day and night, wet goods of all kinds came rolling in, filling the cellar, the attic, the spare bedrooms and everywhere else. There are cases, boxes, packages and barrels in every nook and corner of this club—and more coming in. And we've got no place to put them. The kitchen is piled from ceiling to floor, and the cooks keep drunk all the time. The coal cellar is full. The cigar case is full; and I found two bottles of gin buried in the upholstery of the divan in the ladies' reception room. And all this, gentlemen, in the face of the solemn protest, less than three months ago, of nearly every member against the club handling liquor.

"Another astounding thing is that with all this stuff stored on the premises—and there must be close to a half million dollars' worth—I defy you to find a single member who will admit that he has over a bottle, or, at most, two or three bottles. It is almost incredible, but it is true. It is an amazing fact that men who cannot be corrupted by money and whose word ordinarily is as good as their bond lie like dogs if questioned about their liquor supply. But, to return to the main subject, the trouble—the thing that is causing the

resignations of our members—is the fact that we have no more room for storage. We have not even room for the small service lockers, and of these we are in dire need of five hundred or more at once.”

The effect of this disclosure on the committee was marked. Mr. Hutchinson listened with mingled joy and sadness. Here was a great ocean of refreshment going to waste for want of mere storage! But history tells us that great emergencies raise great men to meet them. And so in this crisis once more the emergency produced the man. Mr. Hutchinson spoke.

He said:

“Gentlemen, members of the Library Committee and Mr. Dumbeck: This is indeed a perilous situation. It is plain to me, and it must be to all of you, that this licker must be saved. (*Applause.*) Here we’ve got a big library room supposed to be devoted to books. But it ain’t. And it never was. Who, I ask you, has ever seen a man in this

club reading a book? Who has ever *heard* of anybody reading a book in this club? Who has ever heard of anybody who has ever heard of anybody reading a book within these walls? No one has! Now, gentlemen, here’s a big room going to waste, threatening, I might say, the very life and existence of our institution. If we fill it full of lockers we can get our members back. If we don’t, the club’s busted! Now which shall it be, gentlemen, books—or licker?”

“Licker!” they chorused.

Dr. Pickett put the motion and it passed with a whoop; and an hour later busy carpenters, at twice the union scale, were building long tiers of small bins and padlocks soared on a rising market.

As for the club library, it was placed in a case that once contained a dozen quarts of “Old Buzzard,” and thus elaborately labeled, was placed conveniently near the alley entrance where it could be, and was, stolen.



Summary of a Love Affair

By K. Sherwood Daiger

HE kissed her.

“Jack,” she said, “you *know* you don’t love me.”

He hadn’t said that he did. He had no intention of saying that he did. And so they were married.



A MAN’S success in any undertaking is measured by the amount of denunciation which would have been his had he failed.



A WISE man does not tell his girl that she is the only girl he ever kissed. He tells her that she is the most interesting.

S. S.—Feb. 3

Before the Entrance of a Motion-Picture Palace

By Charles Hanson Towne

ONE day in Spring,
When the city lay like a golden path^{en}
Spread for the gods to walk upon,
I saw a long line of people
Waiting to enter a motion-picture show.
Flaming billboards
Announced a lurid drama,
And the tragic eyes of a popular actress
Stared out at the passers-by.

Within, I knew it was hot and dark,
Stuffy and artificial;
I knew that mechanical music would be playing,
And sailors would hug their girls in the shadowy place.
There would be an odour of humanity
Unpleasant in such surroundings.
Yet into this dim cavern they filed,
Men, women and little children,
Lured by the red-and-black signboard
And the enchanting name of a screen favourite.
Here they would see the semblance of the great out-of-doors,
Spurious cowboys and pseudo train-robberies,
Flat trees against a wonderful skyline,
And close-ups of studio faces
Too well massaged to be beautiful.

And within a stone's throw there was a trolley-car
That would have taken that pale crowd
Out into the open country in twenty minutes.



A MAN will always fall in love with a woman who encourages him discreetly
in his permanent love affair with himself.



Benediction

By F. Scott Fitzgerald

I

THE Baltimore Station was hot and crowded, so Lois was forced to stand by the telegraph desk for interminable, sticky seconds while a clerk with big front teeth counted and recounted a large lady's day message, to determine whether it contained the innocuous forty-nine words or the fatal fifty-one.

Lois, waiting, decided she wasn't quite sure of the address, so she took the letter out of her bag and ran over it again.

"Darling: it began—

"I understand and I'm happier than life ever meant me to be. If I could give you the things you've always been in tune with—but I can't, Lois; we can't marry and we can't lose each other and let all this glorious love end in nothing.

"Until your letter came, dear, I'd been sitting here in the half dark thinking and thinking where I could go and ever forget you; abroad, perhaps, to drift through Italy or Spain and dream away the pain of having lost you where the crumbling ruins of older, mellower civilizations would mirror only the desolation of my heart—and then your letter came.

"Sweetest, bravest girl, if you'll wire me I'll meet you in Wilmington—till then I'll be here just waiting and hoping for every long dream of you to come true. Howard."

She had read the letter so many times that she knew it word by word, yet it still startled her. In it she found many faint reflections of the man who wrote it—the mingled sweetness and sadness in his dark eyes, the furtive, restless excitement she felt sometimes when he talked to her, his dreamy sensuousness that lulled her mind to sleep.

Lois was nineteen and very romantic and curious and courageous.

The large lady and the clerk having compromised on fifty words, Lois took a blank and wrote her telegram. And there were no overtones to the finality of her decision.

It's just destiny—she thought—it's just the way things work out in this blamed world. If cowardice is all that's been holding me back there won't be any more holding back. So we'll just let things take their course, and never be sorry.

The clerk scanned her telegram:

*Arrived Baltimore today spend day
with my brother meet me
Wilmington three P.M. Wednesday
Love Lois.*

"Fifty-four cents," said the clerk admiringly.

And never be sorry—thought Lois—
and never be sorry—

II

TREES filtering light onto dappled grass. Trees like tall, languid ladies with feather fans coquetting airily with the ugly roof of the monastery. Trees like butlers, bending courteously over placid walks and paths. Trees, trees over the hills on either side and scattering out in clumps and lines and woods all through Maryland, delicate lace on the hems of many yellow fields, dark opaque backgrounds for flowered bushes or wild climbing gardens.

Some of the trees were very gay and young, but the monastery trees were

older than the monastery which, by true monastic standards, wasn't very old at all. And, as a matter of fact, it wasn't technically called a monastery, but only a seminary; nevertheless it shall be a monastery here despite its Victorian architecture or its Edward VII additions, or even its Woodrow Wilsonian, patented, last-a-century roofing.

Out behind was the farm where half a dozen lay brothers were sweating lustily as they moved with deadly efficiency around the vegetable gardens. To the left, behind a row of elms, was an informal baseball diamond where three novices were being batted out by a fourth, amid great chasings and puffings and blowings. And in front as a great mellow bell boomed the half hour a swarm of black, human leaves were blown over the checker-board of paths under the courteous trees.

Some of these black leaves were very old with cheeks furrowed like the first ripples of a splashed pool. Then there was a scattering of middle-aged leaves whose forms when viewed in profile in their revealing gowns were beginning to be faintly unsymmetrical. These carried thick volumes of Thomas Aquinas and Henry James and Cardinal Mercier and Immanuel Kant and many bulging note-books filled with lecture data.

But most numerous were the young leaves; blonde boys of nineteen with very stern, conscientious expressions; men in the late twenties with a keen self-assurance from having taught out in the world for five years—several hundreds of them, from city and town and country in Maryland and Pennsylvania and Virginia and West Virginia and Delaware.

There were many Americans and some Irish and some tough Irish and a few French, and several Italians and Poles, and they walked informally arm and arm with each other in twos and threes or in long rows, almost universally distinguished by the straight mouth and the considerable chin—for this was the Society of Jesus, founded

in Spain five hundred years before by a tough-minded soldier who trained men to hold a breach or a salon, preach a sermon or write a treaty, and do it and not argue . . .

Lois got out of a bus into the sunshine down by the outer gate. She was nineteen with yellow hair and eyes that people were tactful enough not to call green. When men of talent saw her in a street-car they often furtively produced little stub-pencils and backs of envelopes and tried to sum up that profile or the thing that the eyebrows did to her eyes. Later they looked at their results and usually tore them up with wondering sighs.

Though Lois was very jauntily attired in an expensively appropriate traveling affair, she did not linger to pat out the dust which covered her clothes, but started up the central walk with curious glances at either side. Her face was very eager and expectant, yet she hadn't at all that glorified expression that girls wear when they arrive for a Senior Prom at Princeton or New Haven; still as there were no senior proms here perhaps it didn't matter.

She was wondering what he would look like, whether she'd possibly know him from his picture. In the picture, which hung over her mother's bureau at home, he seemed very young and hollow-cheeked and rather pitiful, with only a well-developed mouth and an ill-fitting probationer's gown to show that he had already made a momentous decision about his life. Of course he had been only nineteen then and now he was thirty-six—didn't look like that at all; in recent snap-shots he was much broader and his hair had grown a little thin—but the impression of her brother she had always retained was that of the big picture. And so she had always been a little sorry for him. What a life for a man! Seventeen years of preparation and he wasn't even a priest yet—wouldn't be for a other year.

Lois had an idea that this was all going to be rather solemn if she let it

be. But she was going to give her very best imitation of undiluted sunshine, the imitation she could give even when her head was splitting or when her mother had a nervous breakdown or when she was particularly romantic and curious and courageous. This brother of hers undoubtedly needed cheering up, and he was going to be cheered up, whether he liked it or not.

As she drew near the great, homely front door she saw a man break suddenly away from a group and, pulling up the skirts of his gown, run toward her. He was smiling, she noticed, and he looked very big and—reliable. She stopped and waited, knew that her heart was beating unusually fast.

"Lois!" he cried, and in a second she was in his arms. She was suddenly trembling.

"Lois!" he cried again, "why, this is wonderful! I can't tell you, Lois, how *much* I've looked forward to this. Why, Lois, you're beautiful!"

Lois gasped.

His voice, though restrained, was vibrant with energy and that odd sort of enveloping personality she had thought that she only of the family possessed.

"I'm mighty glad, too—Kieth."

She flushed, but not unhappily, at this first use of his name.

"Lois—Lois—Lois," he repeated in wonder. "Child, we'll go in here a minute, because I want you to meet the rector and then we'll walk around because I have a thousand things to talk to you about."

His voice became graver. "How's Mother?"

She looked at him for a moment and then said something that she had not intended to say at all, the very sort of thing she had resolved to avoid.

"Oh, Kieth—she's—she's getting worse all the time, every way."

He nodded slowly as if he understood.

"Nervous, well—you can tell me about that later. Now—"

She was in a small study with a large desk, saying something to a little,

jovial, white-haired priest who retained her hand for some seconds.

"So this is Lois!"

He said it as if he had heard of her for years.

He entreated her to sit down.

Two other priests arrived enthusiastically and shook hands with her and addressed her as "Kieth's little sister," which she found she didn't mind a bit.

How assured they seemed; she had expected a certain shyness, reserve at least. There were several jokes unintelligible to her, which seemed to delight everyone, and the little Father Rector referred to the trio of them as "dim old monks," which she appreciated, because of course they weren't monks at all. She had a lightning impression that they were especially fond of Kieth—the Father Rector had called him "Kieth" and one of the others had kept a hand on his shoulder all through the conversation. Then she was shaking hands again and promising to come back a little later for some ice-cream, and smiling and smiling and being rather absurdly happy . . . she told herself that it was because Kieth was so delighted in showing her off.

Then she and Kieth were strolling along a path, arm in arm, and he was informing her what an absolute jewel the Father Rector was.

"Lois," he broke off suddenly, "I want to tell you before we go any further how much it means to me to have you come up here. I think it was—mighty sweet of you. I know what a gay time you've been having."

Lois gasped. She was not prepared for this. At first when she had conceived the plan of taking the hot journey down to Baltimore, staying the night with a friend and then coming out to see her brother, she had felt rather consciously virtuous, hoped he wouldn't be priggish or resentful about her not having come before—but walking here with him under the trees seemed such a little thing, and surprisingly a happy thing.

"Why, Kieth," she said quickly, "you know I couldn't have waited a day

longer. I saw you when I was five, but of course I didn't remember, and how could I have gone on without practically ever having seen my only brother."

"It was mighty sweet of you, Lois," he repeated.

Lois blushed—he *did* have personality.

"I want you to tell me all about yourself," he said after a pause. "Of course, I have a general idea what you and mother did in Europe those fourteen years, and then we were all so worried, Lois, when you had pneumonia and couldn't come down with mother—let's see, that was two years ago—and then, well, I've seen your name in the papers, but it's all been so unsatisfactory. I haven't known you, Lois."

She found herself analyzing his personality as she analyzed the personality of every man she met. She wondered if the effect of—of intimacy that he gave was bred by his constant repetition of her name. He said it as if he loved the word, as if it had an inherent meaning to him.

"Then you were at school," he continued.

"Yes, at Farmington. Mother wanted me to go to a convent—but I didn't want to."

She cast a side glance at him to see if he would resent this.

But he only nodded slowly.

"Had enough convents abroad, eh?"

"Yes—and Kieth, convents are different there anyway. Here even in the nicest ones there are so many *common* girls."

He nodded again.

"Yes," he agreed, "I suppose there are, and I know how you feel about it. It grated on me here, at first, Lois, though I wouldn't say that to anyone but you; we're rather sensitive, you and I, to things like this."

"You mean the men here?"

"Yes, some of them of course were fine, the sort of men I'd always been thrown with, but there were others; a man named Regan, for instance—I

hated the fellow, and now he's about the best friend I have. A wonderful character, Lois; you'll meet him later. Sort of man you'd like to have with you in a fight."

Lois was thinking that Kieth was the sort of man she'd like to have with *her* in a fight.

"How did you—how did you first happen to do it?" she asked, rather shyly, "to come here, I mean. Of course mother told me the story about the Pullman car."

"Oh, that—" he looked rather annoyed.

"Tell me that. I'd like to hear you tell it."

"Oh, it's nothing, except what you probably know. It was evening and I'd been riding all day and thinking about—about a hundred things, Lois, and then suddenly I had a sense that someone was sitting across from me, felt that he'd been there for sometime and had a vague idea that he was another traveler. All at once he leaned over toward me and I heard a voice say—'I want you to be a priest, that's what I want.' Well, I jumped up and cried out—'Oh, my God, not that!'—made an idiot of myself before about twenty people; you see there wasn't anyone sitting there at all. A week after that I went to the Jesuit College in Philadelphia and crawled up the last flight of stairs to the rector's office on my hands and knees."

There was another silence and Lois saw that her brother's eyes wore a far away look, that he was staring unseeingly out over the sunny fields. She was stirred by the modulations of his voice and the sudden silence that seemed to flow about him when he finished speaking.

She noticed now that his eyes were of the same fibre as hers, with the green left out, and that his mouth was much gentler, really, than in the picture—or was it that the face had grown up to it lately. He was getting a little bald just on top of his head. She wondered if that was from wearing a hat so much. It seemed awful

for a man to grow bald and no one to care about it.

"Were you—pious when you were young, Kieth?" she asked. "You know what I mean. Were you religious? If you don't mind these personal questions."

"Yes," he said with his eyes still far away—and she felt that his intense abstraction was as much a part of his personality as his attention. "Yes, I suppose I was, when I was—sober."

Lois thrilled slightly.

"Did you drink?"

He nodded.

"I was on the way to making a bad hash of things." He smiled and, turning his grey eyes on her, changed the subject.

"Child, tell me about mother. I know it's been awfully hard for you there, lately. I know you've had to sacrifice a lot and put up with a great deal and I want you to know how fine of you I think it is. I feel, Lois, that you're sort of taking the place of both of us there."

Lois thought quickly how little she had sacrificed; how lately she had constantly avoided her nervous, half-invalid mother.

"Youth shouldn't be sacrificed to age, Kieth," she said steadily.

"I know," he sighed, "and you oughtn't to have the weight on your shoulders, child. I wish I were there to help you."

She saw how quickly he had turned her remark and instantly she knew what this quality was that he gave off. He was *sweet*. Her thoughts went off on a side-track and then she broke the silence with an odd remark.

"Sweetness is hard," she said suddenly.

"What?"

"Nothing," she denied in confusion. "I didn't mean to speak aloud. I was thinking of something—of a conversation with a man named Freddy Kebble."

"Maury Kebble's brother?"

"Yes," she said, rather surprised to think of him having known Maury

Kebble. Still there was nothing strange about it. "Well, he and I were talking about sweetness a few weeks ago. Oh, I don't know—I said that a man named Howard—that a man I knew was sweet and he didn't agree with me and we began talking about what sweetness in a man was. He kept telling me I meant a sort of soppy softness, but I knew I didn't—yet I didn't know exactly how to put it. I see now. I meant just the opposite. I suppose real sweetness is a sort of hardness—and strength."

Kieth nodded.

"I see what you mean. I've known old priests who had it."

"I'm talking about young men," she said, rather defiantly.

"Oh!"

They had reached the now deserted baseball diamond and, pointing her to a wooden bench, he sprawled full length on the grass.

"Are these *young* men happy here, Kieth?"

"Don't they look happy, Lois?"

"I suppose so, but those *young* ones, those two we just passed—have they—are they—"

"Are they signed up?" he laughed.

"No, but they will be next month."

"Permanently?"

"Yes—unless they break down mentally or physically. Of course, in a discipline like ours a lot drop out."

"But those *boys*. Are they giving up fine chances outside—like you did?"

He nodded.

"Some of them."

"But, Kieth, they don't know what they're doing. They haven't had any experience of what they're missing."

"No, I suppose not."

"It doesn't seem fair. Life has just sort of scared them at first. Do they all come in so *young*?"

"No, some of them have knocked around, led pretty wild lives—Regan, for instance."

"I should think that sort would be better," she said meditatively, "men that had *seen* life."

"No," said Kieth earnestly, "I'm not

sure that knocking about gives a man the sort of experience he can communicate to others. Some of the broadest men I've known have been absolutely rigid about themselves. And reformed libertines are a notoriously intolerant class. Don't you think so, Lois?"

She nodded, still meditative, and he continued:

"It seems to me that when one weak person goes to another, it isn't help they want; it's a sort of companionship in guilt, Lois. After you were born, when mother began to get nervous she used to go and weep with a certain Mrs. Comstock. Lord, it used to make me shiver. She said it comforted her, poor old mother. No, I don't think that to help others you've got to show yourself at all. Real help comes from a stronger person whom you respect. And their sympathy is all the bigger because it's impersonal."

"But people want human sympathy," objected Lois. "They want to feel the other person's been tempted."

"Lois, in their hearts they want to feel that the other person's been weak. That's what they mean by human."

"Here in this old monkery, Lois," he continued with a smile, "they try to get all that self-pity and pride in our own wills out of us right at the first. They put us to scrubbing floors—and other things. It's like that idea of saving your life by losing it. You see we sort of feel that the less human a man is, in your sense of human, the better servant he can be to humanity. We carry it out to the end, too. When one of us dies his family can't even have him then. He's buried here under a plain wooden cross with a thousand others."

His tone changed suddenly and he looked at her with a great brightness in his grey eyes.

"But way back in a man's heart there are some things he can't get rid of—and one of them is that I'm awfully in love with my little sister."

With a sudden impulse she knelt beside him in the grass and, leaning over, kissed his forehead.

"You're hard, Kieth," she said, "and I love you for it—and you're sweet."

III

BACK in the reception room Lois met a half dozen more of Kieth's particular friends; there was a young man named Jarvis, rather pale and delicate looking, who, she knew, must be a grandson of old Mrs. Jarvis at home, and she mentally compared this ascetic with a brace of his riotous uncles.

And there was Regan with a scarred face and piercing intent eyes that followed her about the room and often rested on Kieth with something very like worship. She knew then what Kieth had meant about "a good man to have with you in a fight."

He's the missionary type—she thought vaguely—China or something.

"I want Kieth's sister to show us what the shimmy is," demanded one young man with a broad grin.

Lois laughed.

"I'm afraid the Father Rector would send me shimmying out the gate. Besides, I'm not an expert."

"I'm sure it wouldn't be best for Jimmy's soul anyway," said Kieth solemnly. "He's inclined to brood about things like shimmys. They were just starting to do the—maxixe, wasn't it, Jimmy?—when he became a monk and it haunted him his whole first year. You'd see him when he was peeling potatoes, putting his arm around the bucket and making irreligious motions with his feet."

There was a general laugh in which Lois joined.

"An old lady who comes here to Mass sent Kieth this ice-cream," whispered Jarvis under cover of the laugh, "because she'd heard you were coming. It's pretty good, isn't it?"

Lois felt the rims of her eyes growing suddenly red.

IV

THEN half an hour later over in the chapel things suddenly went all wrong.

It was several years since Lois had been at Benediction and at first she was thrilled by the gleaming monstrance with its central spot of white, the air rich and heavy with incense, and the sun shining through the stained glass window of St. Francis Xavier overhead and falling in warm red tracery on the cassock of the man in front of her, but at the first notes of the *O Salutaris Hostia* a heavy weight seemed to descend upon her soul. Kieth was on her right and young Jarvis on her left and she stole uneasy glances at both of them.

What's the matter with me? she thought impatiently.

She looked again. Was there a certain coldness in both their profiles, that she had not noticed before—a pallor about the mouth and a curious set expression in their eyes. She shivered slightly, they were like dead men.

She felt her soul recede suddenly from Kieth's. This was her brother—this, this unnatural person. She caught herself in the act of a little laugh.

"What is the matter with me?"

She passed her hand over her eyes and the weight increased. The incense sickened her and a stray, ragged note from one of the tenors in the choir grated on her ear like the shriek of a slate pencil. She fidgeted and raising her hand to her hair touched her forehead, found moisture on it.

"It's hot in here, hot as the deuce."

Again she repressed a faint laugh and then in an instant the weight upon her heart suddenly diffused into cold fear.

. . . It was that candle on the altar. It was all wrong—wrong. Why didn't somebody see it. There was something in it. There was something coming out of it, taking form and shape above it.

She tried to fight down her rising panic, told herself it was the wick. If the wick wasn't straight candles did something—but they didn't do this! With incalculable rapidity a force was gathering within her, a tremendous, assimilative force, drawing from every sense, every corner of her brain, and as

it surged up inside her she felt an enormous, terrified repulsion. She drew her arms in close to her side, away from Kieth and Jarvis.

Something in that candle . . . she was leaning forward—in another moment she felt she would go forward toward it—didn't anyone see it? . . . anyone?

"Ugh!"

She felt a space beside her and something told her that Jarvis had gasped and sat down very suddenly . . . then she was kneeling and as the flaming monstrance slowly left the altar in the hands of the priest, she heard a great rushing noise in her ears—the crash of the bells was like hammer blows . . . and then in a moment that seemed eternal a great torrent rolled over her heart—there was a shouting there and a lashing as of waves . . .

. . . She was calling, felt herself calling for Kieth, her lips mouthing the words that would not come:

"Kieth, Oh, my God! *Kieth!*"

Suddenly she became aware of a new presence, something external, in front of her, consummated and expressed in warm red tracery. Then she knew. It was the window of St. Francis Xavier. Her mind gripped at it, clung to it finally and she felt herself calling again endlessly, impotently—Kieth—Kieth!

Then out of a great stillness came a voice:

"*Blessed be God.*"

With a gradual rumble sounded the response rolling heavily through the chapel—

"*Blessed be God.*"

The words sang instantly in her heart; the incense lay mystically and sweetly peaceful upon the air, and *the candle on the altar went out.*

"*Blessed be His Holy Name.*"

"*Blessed be His Holy Name.*"

Everything blurred into a swinging mist. With a sound half gasp, half cry she rocked on her feet and reeled backward into Kieth's suddenly outstretched arms.

V

"Lie still, child."

She closed her eyes again. She was on the grass outside, pillowed on Kieth's arm, and Regan was dabbing her head with a cold towel.

"I'm all right," she said quietly.

"I know, but just lie still a minute longer. It was too hot in there. Jarvis felt it, too."

She laughed as Regan again touched her gingerly with the towel.

"I'm all right," she repeated.

But though a warm peace was filling her mind and heart she felt oddly broken and chastened as if someone had held her stripped soul up and laughed.

VI

HALF an hour later she walked leaning on Kieth's arm down the long central path toward the gate.

"It's been such a short afternoon," he sighed, "and I'm so sorry you were sick, Lois."

"Kieth, I'm feeling fine now, really; I wish you wouldn't worry."

"Poor old child. I didn't realize that Benediction'd be a long service for you after your hot trip out here and all."

She laughed cheerfully.

"I guess the truth is I'm not much used to Benediction. Mass is the limit of my religious exertions."

She paused and then continued quickly:

"I don't want to shock you, Kieth, but I can't tell you how—how *inconvenient* being a Catholic is. It really doesn't seem to apply any more. As far as morals go, some of the wildest boys I know are Catholics. And the brightest boys—I mean the ones who think and read a lot, don't seem to believe in much of anything any more."

"Tell me about it. The bus won't be here for another half hour."

They sat down on a bench by the path.

"For instance Gerald Carter, he's published a novel. He absolutely roars

when people mention immortality. And then Howa—well, another man I've known well, lately, who was Phi Beta Kappa at Harvard, says that no intelligent person can believe in Supernatural Christianity. He says Christ was a great socialist, though. Am I shocking you?"

She broke off suddenly.

Kieth smiled.

"You can't shock a monk. He's a professional shock absorber."

"Well," she continued, "that's about all. It seems so—so *narrow*. Church schools, for instance. There's more freedom about things that Catholic people can't see—like birth control."

Kieth winced, almost imperceptibly, but Lois saw it.

"Oh," she said quickly, "everybody talks about everything now."

"It's probably better that way."

"Oh, yes, much better. Well, that's all, Kieth. I just wanted to tell you why I'm a little—lukewarm, at present."

"I'm not shocked, Lois. I understand better than you think. We all go through those times. But I know it'll come out all right, child. There's that gift of faith that we have, you and I, that'll carry us past the bad spots."

He rose as he spoke and they started again down the path.

"I want you to pray for me sometimes, Lois. I think your prayers would be about what I need. Because we've come very close in these few hours, I think."

Her eyes were suddenly shining.

"Oh, we have, we have!" she cried. "I feel closer to you now than to anyone in the world."

He stopped suddenly and indicated the side of the path.

"We might—just a minute—"

It was a pieta, a life-size statue of the Blessed Virgin set within a semi-circle of rocks.

Feeling a little self-conscious she dropped on her knees beside him and made an unsuccessful attempt at prayer.

She was only half through when he rose. He took her arm again.

"I wanted to thank Her for letting us have this day together," he said simply.

Lois felt a sudden lump in her throat and she wanted to say something that would tell him how much it had meant to her, too. But she found no words.

"I'll always remember this," he continued, his voice trembling a little—"this summer day with you. It's been just what I expected. You're just what I expected, Lois."

"I'm awfully glad, Kieth."

"You see, when you were little they kept sending me snap-shots of you, first as a baby and then as a child in socks playing on the beach with a pail and shovel, and then suddenly as a wistful little girl with wondering, pure eyes—and I used to build dreams about you. A man has to have something living to cling to. I think, Lois, it was your little white soul I tried to keep near me—even when life was at its loudest and every intellectual idea of God seemed the sheerest mockery, and desire and love and a million things came up to me and said, 'Look here at me! See, I'm Life. You're turning your back on it!' All the way through that shadow, Lois, I could always see your baby soul flitting on ahead of me, very frail and very clear and wonderful."

Lois was crying softly. They had reached the gate and she rested her elbow on it and dabbed furiously at her eyes.

"And then later, child, when you were sick I knelt all one night and asked God to spare you for me—for I knew I wanted more then; He had taught me to want more. I wanted to know you moved and breathed in the same world with me. I saw you growing up, that white innocence of yours changing to a flame and burning to give light to other weaker souls. And then I wanted some day to take your children on my knee and hear them call the crabbed old monk Uncle Kieth."

He seemed to be laughing now as he talked.

"Oh, Lois, Lois, I was asking God for more than I wanted—the letters you'd write me and the place I'd have at your table. I wanted an awful lot, Lois, dear."

"You've got me, Kieth," she sobbed, "you know it, say you know it. Oh, I'm acting like a baby but I didn't think you'd be this way, and I—oh, Kieth—Kieth—"

He took her hand and patted it softly.

"Here's the bus. You'll come again, won't you?"

She put her hands on his cheeks and drawing his head down, pressed her tear-wet face against his.

"Oh, Kieth, brother, some day I'll tell you something—"

He helped her in, saw her take down her handkerchief and smile bravely at him, as the driver flicked his whip and the bus rolled off. Then a thick cloud of dust rose around it and she was gone.

For a few minutes he stood there on the road, his hand on the gate-post, his lips half parted in a smile.

"Lois," he said aloud in a sort of wonder, "Lois, Lois."

Later, some probationers passing noticed him kneeling before the pieta, and coming back after a time found him still there. And he was there until twilight came down and the courteous trees grew garrulous overhead and the crickets took up their burden of song in the dusky grass.

VII

THE first clerk in the telegraph booth in the Baltimore Station whistled through his buck teeth at the second clerk:

"S'matter?"

"See that girl—no, the pretty one with the big black dots on her veil. Too late—she's gone. You missed some'n."

"What about her?"

"Nothing. 'Cept she's damn good looking. Came in here yesterday and sent a wire to some guy to meet her

somewhere. Then a minute ago she came in with a telegram all written out and was standin' there goin' to give it to me when she changed her mind or somep'n and all of a sudden tore it up."

"Hm."

The first clerk came around the counter and picking up the two pieces of paper from the floor put them together idly. The second clerk read

them over his shoulder and subconsciously counted the words as he read. There were just thirteen.

This is in the way of a permanent goodbye. I should suggest Italy.

Lois.

"Tore it up, eh?" said the second clerk.



Song of the Jealous Lover

By Harold Cook

ME^N can weave a tapestry,
Green and crimson threads, and blue,
That shall be a cloak for thee,
Rich and new.

And they can build thee a high house
Secure, that will stay the rain,
Where you shall sit, a very flower
Of love and pain.

They can build, weave a new gown—
My song is old and soft and low,
But it can pull a high house down,
Then rise, and go.



A^{MAN} ceases to be interesting to a woman when she learns that he is engaged—but he becomes interesting again when she learns that he is married.



E^{XPERIENCE} in man is something bought with the tears of plain women and the kisses of pretty ones.



A^{CYNIC} is not one who has loved and lost. He is one who has been loved and won.

Répétition Générale

By George Jean Nathan and H. L. Mencken

§ 1

The Confederate Pastime.—A good part of the enormous literature of lynching is devoted to a discussion of its causes, but most of that discussion is ignorant and some of it is deliberately mendacious. The majority of Southern commentators argue that the motive of the lynchers is a laudable yearning to "protect Southern womanhood," despite the plain fact that only a very small proportion of the blackamoors hanged and burned are even so much as accused of molesting Southern womanhood. On the other hand, some of the negro intellectuals of the North ascribe the recurrent butcheries to the Southern white man's jealousy of the Southern black, who is fast acquiring property and reaching out for the prerogatives that go therewith. Finally, certain white Northerners seek a cause in mere political animosity, arguing that the Southern white hates the negro because the latter is his theoretical equal at the polls, though actually not permitted to vote.

All of these notions seem to me to be fanciful. Lynching is popular in the South simply because the Southern populace, like any other populace, likes a thrilling show, and because no other sort of show is provided by the backward culture of the region. The introduction of prize-fighting down there, or baseball on a large scale, or amusement places like Coney Island, or amateur athletic contests, or picnics like those held by the more truculent Irish fraternal organizations, or any such wholesale devices for shocking and diverting the proletariat would un-

doubtedly cause a great decline in lynching. The art is practised, in the overwhelming main, in remote and God-forsaken regions, in which the only rival entertainment is offered by one-sided political campaigns, third-rate chautauquas and idiotic religious "revivals." When it is imitated in the North, it is always in some drab factory or mining town. Genuine race riots, of course, sometimes occur in the larger cities, but these are always economic in origin, and have nothing to do with lynching properly so-called. One could not imagine an actual lynching at, say Atlantic City, with ten or fifteen bands playing, speak-easies in operation up every alley, a theater in every block or two, and the boardwalk swarming with ladies of joy. Even a Mississippian, transported to such scenes, succumbs to the atmosphere of pleasure, and so has no seizures of moral rage against the poor darkey.

Lynching, in brief, is a phenomenon of isolated and stupid communities, a mark of imperfect civilization; it shows itself in inverse proportion to the number of shoot-the-chutes, symphony orchestras, roof gardens, theaters, horse races, yellow journals and automatic pianos. No one ever heard of a lynching in Paris, in Munich, in Rome or in London. But there are incessant lynchings in the remoter parts of Russia, in the backwoods of Serbia, Bulgaria and Herzegovina, in Mexico and Nicaragua, and in such barbarous American states as Alabama, Georgia and South Carolina.

It would be quite easy, I believe, for any Southern community to get rid of

lynching by establishing a good brass band and having concerts every evening. The trouble down there is not a special viciousness. The Southern poor white, taking him by and large, is probably no worse and no better than the proletarian of the North. What ails the whole region is Philistinism. It has lost its old aristocracy of the soil and has not yet developed an aristocracy of money. The result is that its cultural ideas are set by stupid and unimaginative men—Southern equivalents of the retired Iowa steer stuffers and grain sharks who pollute Los Angeles, American equivalents of the rich English non-conformists. These men, though they have accumulated wealth, have not yet acquired the capacity to enjoy civilized recreations. Worse, most of them are still so barbarous that they regard such recreations as immoral.

The dominating opinion of the South is thus against most of the devices that would diminish lynching by providing substitutes for it. In every Southern town some noisy dodo of an evangelical clergyman exercises a local tyranny. These men are firmly against all the divertissements of more cultured regions. They oppose prize-fighting, horse-racing, Sunday baseball and games of chance. They are bitter Prohibitionists. By their incessant vice-crusades they reduce the romance of sex to furtiveness and hog-gishness. They know nothing of music or the drama, and view a public library merely as something to be rigorously censored. I am convinced that their ignorant moral enthusiasm is largely to blame for the prevalence of lynching. No doubt they themselves are sneakily conscious of the fact, or at least aware of it subconsciously, for lynching is the only public amusement that they never denounce.

§ 2

On Marriage.—The ideal marriage is one contracted by a man and woman

who have been jilted by their first loves. It is a marriage securely based upon defeat and disillusion, the only sound ground from which marriage may flower into mutual understanding, into the love that is comradeship, and into the sweet and lasting peace that is ever the child of rosemary.

§ 3

The Charm of Woman.—A woman is charming in the degree of her reaction to a charming man.

§ 4

On Liberty.—It is a mistake to believe that what men want above everything else is political liberty. What men actually want is not political liberty, but personal liberty. The moment a man is given political liberty he loses personal liberty. Every time a man sticks his vote in a ballot box he puts an extra policeman on his trail.

§ 5

Literary Note.—What ails American fiction, at bottom, is not a faulty technique, nor lack of courage, nor even insufficient imagination; it is simply a banal point of view. The average American novel is not only aimed deliberately at shoe-drummers and shop-girls; it is produced by a literatus with the *mind* of a shoe-drummer or a shop-girl. One is offended by it as one is offended by a speech by a political mountebank or a sermon by an evangelical divine. Even when it happens to be sound it is somehow disgusting.

§ 6

On Actors.—Choosing the stage as a profession, American women make a much better showing than American men for the same reason that Englishmen make a much better showing than American men. Women, and Englishmen, are actors by nature.

§7

Reminiscence in the Present Tense.—

One of the fellows I can't understand is the man with violent likes and dislikes in his drams—the man who likes high-balls but can't abide malt liquor, or who drinks white wine but not red, or who holds that Scotch whiskey benefits his kidneys whereas rye whiskey paralyzes his liver. As for me, I am prepared to admit some merit in every alcoholic beverage ever devised by the incomparable brain of man, and drink them all when the occasions are suitable—wine with meat, the hard liquors when the soul languishes, beer on jolly evenings. In other words, I am omnibibulous, or, more simply, ombibulous.

§8

Fallacy XXVIII.—The popular theory that danger adds zest to amour is perfumed with absurdity. While it may be true in the case of barbers, it is anything but true in the case of other men. I know. I've tried it.

Amour is only pleasant, only charming, when it is leisurely and comfortable. To scent it with danger is to delete it of its very sub-structure. The man who finds pleasure in making love to a woman with a vigilant husband or to a girl with a father who hides behind a drawing-room portière armed with a baseball bat is the kind of idiot who finds pleasure in seeing how near to the edge of the Grand Canyon he can balance himself without falling over. The most enjoyable love affair in the world would be one in which the woman was at once a widow and an orphan, and the man a Philip Nolan.

§9

Ideas and the Mob.—The practical politician, whatever his pretensions to statecraft and profundity, is never a man who honestly seeks to inoculate the innumerable caravan of voters with new ideas; he is always a man who

seeks to search out and prick into energy the basic ideas that are already in them, and to turn the resultant effervescence of emotion to his own private uses. So with the religious prophet, the social and economic reformer, and every other variety of uplifter and pill-monger, down to and including the lowliest press-agent of a fifth assistant Secretary of State, moving-picture actor, or Y. M. C. A. boob-squeezing committee. Such adept professors of incandescent idealism never actually teach anything new; all they do is to give new forms to beliefs already in being, to arrange the bits of glass, onyx, horn, ivory, porphyry and corundum in the mental kaleidoscope of the populace into novel permutations. To change the figure, they may give the medulla oblongata, the cerebral organ of the great masses of simple men, a powerful diuretic or emetic, but they seldom, if ever, add anything to its primary supply of fats.

These simple men are almost unteachable; it would be a sheer impossibility to engage them with anything actually new. If in the course of long years they gradually lose their old faiths, it is only to fill the gaps with new faiths that restate the old ones in new terms. Nothing, in fact, could be more commonplace than the observation that the crazes which periodically ravage the proletariat are, in the main, no more than distorted echoes of delusions cherished centuries ago. The fundamental religious ideas of the lower orders of Christendom have not changed materially in two thousand years, and they were old when they were first filched from the heathen of northern Africa and Asia Minor. The Iowa Wesleyan of today, imagining him competent to understand them at all, would be able to accept the tenets of Augustine without changing more than a few accents and punctuation marks. Every Sunday his ecclesiastics batter his ears with diluted and debased stealings from *De Civitate Dei*, and almost every article of his practical ethics may be found clearly

stated in the eminent bishop's Ninety-third Epistle. So in politics. The Bolsheviks of today not only poll-parrot the balderdash of the French demagogues of 1789; they also mouth what was gospel to every *bête blonde* in the Teutonic forest of the fifth century.

Truth shifts and changes like a cataract of diamonds; its aspect is never precisely the same at two successive instants. But error flows down the channel of history like some great stream of lava or infinitely lethargic glacier. It is the one relatively fixed thing in a world of chaos. It is, perhaps, the one thing that gives human society the small stability amid all the oscillation of a gelatinous cosmos to save it from the wreck that ever menaces. Without their dreams men would have fallen upon and devoured one another long ago—and yet every dream is an illusion, and every illusion is a lie.

§ 10

The Critical Subterfuge.—The commonest subterfuge of the incompetent critic is the concealing of ignorance under amiability. Show me a constantly amiable and generously good-natured critic and I shall show you a critic whose mind, when he bares it to himself at night, is full of quicksand and quaking misgivings.

§ 11

Prohibition and Amour.—The greatest burden of Prohibition will fall upon amour. Without the friendly co-operation of alcohol, love-making—to the only kind of man that interests a woman—will be a difficult and awkward business. This has already been demonstrated, and distressingly, to any man who tried it during the *répétition générale* for the dry period. Without a few cocktails cavorting in his middle, a man embarking upon the preliminaries of amour feels too idiotic to continue. His mind is too clear for a business that, however charming, is intrinsically

always banal and silly. His amorous words fall upon his own ears in all their stenciled gauntness. They lack the carelessness, the ardour, the thoughtlessness essential to them and to the great game, qualities that—save in the case of a professional actor, a clergyman or a Frenchman—only a touch of alcohol can bequeath to them. Love-making is a sort of boozy human music, and it can be played only, in the instance of an adult man, upon a keyboard of mellifluous beverages.

§ 12

The Fatuous Female.—Women, when it comes to snaring men through the eye, bait a great many hooks that fail to fluster the fish. Nine-tenths of their primping and decorating of their persons not only doesn't please men, it actually repels men. I often pass two days running without encountering a single woman who is charmingly dressed. Nearly all of them run to painful colour schemes, absurd designs and excessive over-ornamentation.

Even at the basic feminine art of pigmenting their faces very few of them excel. The average woman seems to think that she is most lovely when her sophistication of her complexion is most adroitly concealed—when the rice powder is rubbed in so hard that it is almost invisible, and the pencilling of eyes and lips is perfectly realistic. This is a false notion. Most men of appreciative eye have no objection to artificiality *per se*—so long as it is intrinsically sightly. The mark made by a lip-stick may be very beautiful; there are many lovely shades of scarlet, crimson and vermilion. A man with eyes in his head admires them for themselves; he doesn't have to be first convinced that they are non-existent—that what he sees is not the mark of a lip-stick at all, but an authentic lip.

So with the eyes. Nothing could be more charming than an eye properly reinforced; the naked organ is not to be compared with it; nature is an idiot when it comes to shadows. But it must

be admired as a work of art, not as a miraculous and incredible eye. . . . Women, in this important and venerable art, stick too closely to crude representation. They forget that men do not admire the technique, but the result. What they should do is to forget realism for a while, and concentrate their attention upon composition, chiaroscuro and colour.

§ 13

The Flapper.—The flapper of today differs from the young girl of yesterday not in that, unlike her sister of yesterday, she is hep to all the esoteric subjects, but in that, unlike her sister of yesterday, she is hep to all the maidenly artifices which successfully conceal from men her hepness to those subjects.

§ 14

A Needed Book.—If, by the Providence of God, the learned Dr. Frank J. Wilstach ever finishes his revision of his invaluable "Dictionary of Similes"—a work whose worth is made patent by the six LL.D.'s, four Litt.D.'s and nine M.A.'s conferred upon the compiler—he should at once spit upon his hands and consecrate himself to a new dictionary of quotations. He is precisely the man to do it thoroughly and *con amore*—and the need is vast indeed. All the existing books of that sort are but half useful. They come in handily when one wants to find out who wrote this or that, but they are almost valueless when one seeks a new and apposite quotation to adorn a discourse. In other words, all the quotations in them are familiar, stale and worn-out. What is needed is a book that will present an entirely new set, and by preference a set avoiding the platitudinousness now so painfully visible. All of us have heard and used, time and again, everything that Shakespeare, Shelley, Milton, Goethe, Martin Tupper and Aristotle ever wrote. What we want, when we settle down to

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compose an oration or an essay, is an outfit of racy and novel apothegms by other sages, and, preferably, by sages less correct. What we want is an easy guide to the witticisms and iconoclasms of such fellows as Stirner, Nietzsche, Shaw, Chesterton, Mohammed, Thomas Jefferson, Brigham Young, Bismarck, Disraeli, Mary Baker G. Eddy, Rabelais, Cotton Mather, Balzac, Zola, William James, William Devery, King Edward VII and General Bernhardt.

Wilstach would do the job capitably. He has a nose for humour and is almost incredibly diligent. He devoted twenty-five years to the compilation of his collection of similes, and travelled the whole of Christendom in search of rare specimens. He got a great many from old books, but an even larger number from talk overheard on the streets. He spent a whole summer with Forepaugh's Circus, eagerly taking down the pearls of the canvassmen, barkers, police-bribers, sluggers, ring-masters and human snakes. Jailed in Kansas for smoking a cigarette in public, he spent his thirty days collecting the similes used by his fellow felons. He was aided, first and last, by such varied amateurs as Anatole France, Buffalo Bill, Lord Reading, the late General Huerta, Mark Twain, Senator Gumshoe Bill Stone, Amos Rusie and the lamented Dr. Crippen. Imagine a man of such assiduity and such literary connections throwing himself into a new dictionary of quotations! It would knock out all others overnight.

§ 15

On Women and Money.—The most gracious heroine of life, as of fiction, is the poor girl—and for a simple reason. Money gives a woman confidence, and confidence is the deadliest enemy of a woman's attractiveness and allure. Money gives a woman a sense of security; it steals from her all of her charming little Cinderella wishes; it envelops her with a pampered air; it makes her, if however vaguely, self-conscious. Such a woman no man can

take into his arms without some slight, undefined feeling of restraint. When a man embraces for the first time the woman he loves, he first embraces the child in her and then the woman herself. The poor girl is always a child before the great world, with its surprises and hopes and treasures. The rich girl, however young, is always a woman.

§ 16

On Clothes.—Despite the fact that women devote most of their free time to the matter, men ordinarily look much better in their clothes than women do. One seldom encounters a man who looks an absolute guy, whereas such women are very numerous; in the average theater audience they constitute a majority of at least nine-tenths. The reason is not far to seek.

The clothes of men are plain in design and neutral in colour. The only touch of genuine colour is in the face, the center of interest—exactly where it ought to be. If there is any other colour at all, it is a faint suggestion in the cravat—adjacent to the face, and so leading the eye toward it.

It is colour that kills the clothes of the average woman. She runs to bright spots that take the eye away from her face and hair. She ceases to be a woman clothed and becomes a mere piece of clothing womaned. Women who know how to dress devote their chief attention to colour schemes. In particular, they devote themselves to devising plain and unobtrusive colour schemes. The best-dressed woman, like the best-dressed man, is one whose clothes are sensed but not actually seen. Only one woman in twenty ever learns this.

§ 17

The Tomb of Liberty.—Ask the average respectable American what is the salient passion in his emotional armamentarium—what is the idea that lies at the bottom of all his other ideas—and it is very probable that, nine times out of ten, he will nominate

his hot and unquenchable rage for liberty. He regards himself, indeed, as the chief exponent of liberty in the whole world, and all its other advocates as no more than his followers, half timorous and half envious. To question his ardour is to insult him as grievously as if one questioned the honour of the republic or the chastity of his wife. And yet it must be plain to any dispassionate observer that this ardour, in the course of a century and a half, has lost a large part of its old burning reality and descended to the estate of a mere phosphorescent superstition. The American of today, in fact, probably enjoys less personal liberty than any other man of Christendom, and even his political liberty is fast succumbing to the new dogma that certain theories of government are virtuous and lawful and others abhorrent and felonious.

Moreover, this gradual (and, of late, rapidly progressive) decay of freedom goes almost without challenge; the American has grown so accustomed to the denial of his constitutional rights and to the minute regulation of his conduct by swarms of spies, letter-openers, informers and *agents provocateurs* that he no longer makes any serious protest. It is surely a significant fact that, in the face of the late almost incredible proceedings under the so-called Espionage Act and other such laws, the only objections heard of came either from the persons directly affected—nine-tenths of them Socialists, pacifists, or citizens accused of German sympathies, and hence without any rights whatever in American law and equity—or from a small group of professional libertarians, chiefly naturalized aliens.

The American people, as a people, acquiesced docilely in all these tyrannies, both during the war and after the war, just as they acquiesced in the invasion of their common rights by the Prohibition Amendment. Worse, they not only acquiesced docilely; they approved actively; they were quite as hotly against the few protestants as

they were against the original victims, and gave their hearty approbation to every proposal that the former be punished, too.

The really startling phenomenon of the late war, indeed, was not the grotesque abolition of liberty in the name of liberty, but the failure of that usurpation to arouse anything approaching public indignation. It is impossible to imagine the men of Jackson's army or even of Grant's army submitting to any such absolutism without a furious struggle, but at the present day it is viewed with the utmost complacency. The descendants of the Americans who punished John Adams so melodramatically for the Alien and Seditions Acts of 1798 failed to raise a voice against the far more drastic legislation of 1917. What is more, they failed to raise a voice against its execution upon the innocent as well as upon the guilty, in gross violation of the most elemental principles of justice and rules of law.

§18

The Jazz Webster—

1. LITERATURE: Disinfected music.
2. TAXIMETER: A device for registering the distance between the passenger's starting point and the chauffeur's imagination.
3. EPIGRAM: A platitude *enceinte*.
4. POLITICIAN: One who makes the laws, and then laughs at those who keep them.
5. TRUTH: The sort of lie that somehow tickles and sticks.
6. LOVER: An apprentice second husband; victim No. 2 in the larval state.
7. TEMPTATION: An irresistible force in contact with a movable body.
8. CHAUTAUQUA: A place for instructing persons not worth talking to in the not worth knowing.
9. CHRISTMAS: The spiritual Fourth of July.

(To be continued)



Orientale

By Leslie Nelson Jennings

DEW, in forgotten gardens, drips
 Down curious sculptures, calm as death,
 Silence upon their marble lips
 That once drew living breath.

Slow water impiously mars
 The silver image of the sky
 In pools where drift the splintered stars
 And mystic lilies lie.

And the small winds are numerous
 With tales that best were never told:
 Strange words that move and trouble us—
 Names that we knew of old!

What are these dreams of lost delight! . . .
 Rising from irreligious lands,
 Is it the moon who yields the night
 Her pale, Buddhistic hands?

Sine Qua Non

By Aiken Reichner

THE eminent biologist, after years of study and experimentation, produced a living child in his laboratory; and, in his frenzied triumph, poisoned his wife. She was of no more use to him. But, one day, the infant, left alone, came across the formula and swallowed it. The biologist married again.



The Tinkers' Dog

By Francis Carlin

A BARGAIN I made with the tinkers
And I but a lump of a lad,
When they sold me a dog for the shilling
That was all I had.

Stiff were the hairs on his body,
The tail of which never was curled,
Being hung on a hound that had always
Been down in the world.

For the tinkers are terrible people
With neither a home nor a hob,
But they sang in the Pub of Molary
After spending the bob;

And their songs were the best of the bargain,
For I had them by tongue and by thought
Long after the tinkers were followed
By the dog I bought.



“CORKING” used to be a favourite expletive signifying delight, but in these dreary times the only really delightful word is “uncorking.”

The Mid-Victorians

By Edith Chapman

THE room was lighted with soft, yellow candles. It was a goldish room, with here and there touches of blue and black. And Mrs. Faxon was, on the whole, a goldish person—with the same blue and black touches. Her gown was gold; her hair was a subtler gold; there were lovely, warm amber tones to her complexion; her eyes were so dark as to leave one uncertain whether they were black or whether they were blue.

There was, moreover, everything about her to suggest—in regard to the gold before alluded to—less its physical than its metaphysical values. She was small and expensive and precious. She was *de luxe*. All her elaborate appointments seemed inseparable from her, and extremely fitting. One could only see her in a half-light of large, rich rooms and expensive draperies. The lavish number of jewels she always wore was borne out by her general, though frail, magnificence. . . . She existed purely as decoration—like her old French furniture and exotic gowns.

As Houghton stared at her he let her suggest to him those fragile, almost unreal, Oriental women whom he used to see in Egypt. Wasn't she, in the same way, made to be kept under glass? What could she *do*, for instance, with her little useless hands? They seemed scarcely large enough or strong enough to lift the tea things on the huge tea-tray in front of her; the heavy carved silver, the cargoes of cakes and sweets. She had such an excessive supply of this gaudy confectionery!

He wondered why she had invited him, at last. To be sure he had urged

her often enough, but with more curiosity than hope. It wasn't as if he were urging her to any unusual course. He had learned that she liked, occasionally, to arrange these *tête-à-tête* teas. It was very pleasant to be here. He accepted his cup of tea from her and then drew his chair nearer.

She raised her eyes and gently smiled at him.

"It was good of you to come," she murmured. "I sometimes become so bored."

"It is because you have nothing to do. It must be tedious to have nothing to do."

She only smiled again. "It is."

He wondered rather vaguely whether he was supposed to make love to her. With women like Theo one never knew. To be sure she was Bruce Faxon's wife. Bruce Faxon, one of the most correct, the most orthodox, men in town. And even in her own right she was a Carton. On the other hand, her particular set was growing rather radical. It was the form their nervousness took.

He hitched his chair still nearer and let his fingers feel for hers. She didn't draw her hand away, but patted his softly. He had a very friendly feeling for her as he felt her little fingers waver in his. He let all his scruples go, or rather, call it his expedience.

Whatever it was on her part—ennui, nerves, the dread of seeming puritanical—there was nothing to prevent his profiting by it, at least to the extent of a slight pressure or two of those confiding fingers. But what further overtures he may have intended were rudely in-

terrupted by the sound of the front door opening.

Theo perceptibly paled. "My husband. But he never comes home at this time. How abominably awkward!"

Houghton felt awkward enough. What had he been let in for? What was her game? By the time Faxon appeared in the doorway he was thoroughly angry.

"No tea for me, Theo," the other man was saying, and then, as he took in the situation: "Oh, I say, Houghton, I didn't see you at first. It's this infernally dim light my wife insists on. Calls it artistic. For my part, I like to be able to see the various objects of my environment, not to mention the people. How are you, old chap? I'm only in for a change of clothes. You won't mind my rushing? . . . Remember, dear, I'm dining out tonight. I wish I could stop for tea."

As Faxon's step grew fainter on the staircase Houghton stiffly rose. "I'm sorry if I've done anything awkward. I'm as sorry for myself as for you. Bruce is an awfully fine fellow. I wonder if you realize how lucky you are."

Theo lazily reflected on his temerity to stand there moralizing to her. What Pharisees men were! What prigs! Even the worst of them. For Houghton was one of the worst; a regular dog in the manger. An utter hypocrite! Why had she thought, for a moment, that she liked him? How affected his voice was; how silly and pompous he looked.

"Perhaps you'd better go," she suggested, and she didn't trouble to give him her hand.

II

SHE waited for her husband to come downstairs. There was sure to be a scene. He was so punctilious about some things. She sat quite still, expecting him. And soon she was rewarded by the sound of his step. However, he hurried past the drawing-room door. "Good-bye, dear; I'm in a frightful

rush, and I shall probably be late getting back. Don't sit up for me."

As the outer door closed, she settled back a trifle disappointedly. She hated postponing things. Of course his *sang froid* only meant that he was angry. Angrier, probably, than he had ever been before. And he was going to keep her in suspense a good while before he came down on her. How tiresome! She hated suspense. She would much prefer to go through with it at once. And get it over with.

But perhaps she wasn't going to get through with it for some time. Bruce was such an inscrutable person. She had never pretended to understand him. To be sure he had always given her a great deal of liberty, but this precise sort of situation had never occurred before. He had never caught her in such an embarrassing position. And she had always heard that men who seemed the most tolerant were those who, in crises, behaved the worst. What if he were seriously angry with her? He might even intend to send her away.

She rose nervously and, going over to her little writing-table, sat down and leaned her head on her hands. Perhaps she had better go away of her own accord while she still had the time. Perhaps she had better write him a little note and then leave that very day. . . . But no, she couldn't. She loved him too much; she loved her home; she was utterly dependent on it and on him. She would wait. He couldn't be going to do anything so absurd. Just because she had let a man come and take tea with her. And hold her hand.

It was all so ridiculous. And Houghton, of all people. But how could Bruce be sure what Houghton had come for? He may have thought that Houghton was in the habit of coming. He had found them alone, apparently by appointment, at an hour when he was supposed to be safely out of the way. The very fact of his having taken it so casually proved the degree to which he had been upset. It was always in moments of highest tension that he became the

most contained, the most inscrutable. Not for worlds would he have let Houghton see that he had been taken by surprise!

She sighed; she wished that she knew her husband better. In the three years of their married life she had never really known him. His manner to her had always been the same: impeccable, but aloof. Beneath it all she felt that he was fond of her, immensely fond of her. But he held her so utterly off from him. She didn't apparently figure for him, outside a very limited sphere. And he didn't intend that she should. She knew nothing of his life; he inquired nothing of hers. It was this aloofness of his which fascinated her most, and which at the same time drove her to seek for interests outside.

However, she had never meant to be too aberrant. There seemed to be certain things he expected of her, for all his indulgence. And she had never contemplated defying him. She had never cared to invite his contempt; that supercilious, careless, but possibly dynamic disapproval which she had felt latent in him from time to time. There was something authoritative about his very reserve. She knew that he might judge very severely what he would consider a lapse of taste.

She wished he would come *and get it over with*. Blow her up, punish her in whatever way he intended.

The worst of it was that she couldn't conceive of him as blowing her up. He wouldn't do anything so literal or so crude. However he showed his anger, it wouldn't be in that futile, explosive manner.

The longer she brooded the more she cursed herself for her folly. What was there about her, unstable, temperamental, that let her take such risks? Why couldn't she sit tight on her good fortune? There wasn't another such man as Bruce Faxon. Intelligent, worldly, distinguished; a man whose mere silent presence in a room gave to the whole gathering a note of breeding and force. He gave her the only distinction she pos-

sessed. For innumerable other women were as pretty and as rich. Most of her friends, for instance, whose manœuvres she had only been aping, after all.

What had she to gain by copying such examples as Sally Lerch and Mida Fleming? She knew how Bruce regarded all this set. As utterly illiterate and vulgar. All their cheap experimenting he considered merely so much nervous waste. Unless one could act intelligently one had better not act at all. "To go off half-cocked," as he called it, was the most disagreeable proof of puerility; that lack of any power to reason or correlate which, in an adult human being, was the least he required. He was as squeamish of anything extravagant as she was of the philistine or prosaic. . . . He wouldn't easily forgive her.

And then, suddenly, she paused. Might it not be that really to anger him would be one method of breaking past his defences, forcing a way through his reserve. Whatever the compass of his resentment, it might at least light up for her those chambers of his personality which he wasn't accustomed to reveal.

Perhaps the unlucky affair had about it something fortuitous after all. Her husband intrigued her more than she liked to confess, even to herself. She had in respect to him—had always had—a tremendous curiosity.

She began to look forward to the reckoning with a not entirely unpleasant anticipation.

He had told her not to wait up for him, but she would wait up.

She felt very like a heroine in a play.

III

FOR all her resolution, on that particular evening no accounting took place. It was as it had always been. Before his bland, impervious manner her resolutions went down as leaves before the wind.

He came in shortly before one and, finding her still up, evinced great concern. He cut short all her remarks and

sent her to bed. That was all that could be said for it. The affectionate courtesy of his tone scantily concealed that authority which, though he appeared never to be exerting it, was as positive a feature of him as the ring of his voice or the clear cold blue of his eyes. There was that about him which left one without the power to disobey. It was a personal forcefulness, a superior strength, rather than any wilfully exerted control. Theo always wondered why she submitted to him so tamely; and she went on submitting.

The next day the same story was repeated. She rose early, an unwonted feat for her. She hoped that the shock of her unexpected appearance at the breakfast table would shatter his reserve. But nothing of the sort occurred. He was as friendly, and as non-committal, as ever.

During the day her dread increased to the diminishment of her anticipation. He must be very angry after all. The deeper waters ran, the more one had to fear from them, she had been told. She was afraid of his self-control. Her own impulsiveness lent it all the terror of an unknown quantity.

She couldn't stand the suspense any longer. After dinner she would pluck up her courage and force an issue.

She arranged that they should dine at home, and alone. During dinner his cordial manner showed no abatement. She laid it to the fact that the servants were present.

When they were finally back in the drawing-room she turned a flood of light into the usually dim place and then stationed herself in front of him.

"What are you going to do?"

As he took it all in—the brightly-lit room, her theatrical pose, the extraordinary tension of her manner, and her forced, anxious smile—a shade of distaste crossed his face.

"What am I going to do?" he murmured. "I'm going to light a cigarette. Won't you have one?"

Then, as she still continued to stand didactically in front of him:

"Hadn't you better sit down?"

She turned away with a quivering chin and sat down listlessly in one of the large chairs, which straightway blotted out her delicate figure with its heavy upholstered lines. The only salient spot against the hard blue back was her golden hair.

"Bruce," she pleaded, "don't torture me. Tell me what you are going to do."

He sat down near her and gently inhaled his cigarette.

"Really, Theo, you must believe I am utterly sincere when I tell you I haven't an idea what you are talking about. What am I going to do about what?"

She propped her head on her hand and stared at him.

"I can't make you out. Won't you take pity on my crudeness and be quite frank with me, for once? Tell me what you are thinking. About yesterday afternoon, I mean. You were very much vexed that I let Jack Houghton come here for tea. Isn't it so?"

He laughed his quiet, suppressed laugh.

"I haven't thought anything about it one way or the other. It seemed to me entirely your affair."

"Then you didn't mind?"

"Mind? Why no. Why *should* I have minded? I didn't have to entertain him."

Still her incredulous senses couldn't accept this statement.

"Are you mocking me?"

He glanced at her directly for the first time.

"Theo, you're carrying your unwholesome reading too far, I'm afraid. You're allowing it to make you fatuous. . . . Please, please, dear, don't go in for that pseudo-analysis that your friends are so addicted to."

"Why is it pseudo?" was all she found to say, at the moment.

"Because their technique is so elementary. Their only tests are the stock formulas they find in the books they read. And they read such silly books."

"What do you mean?" She almost

sobbed it out. He bewildered her so.

"I mean that you're straining very hard to manufacture an 'interesting situation.' Just as you did yesterday afternoon. Until tonight you've never tried to include me in this sort of experimenting. Please be charitable and don't begin."

She felt a faint scarlet creeping over her face. "I don't more than half understand you."

"No, it isn't that. You don't understand yourself because you don't want to understand. You'd do anything, even take some risks, I imagine, not to appear to yourself what you unquestionably are."

She left her chair abruptly and came over to kneel on a low one beside his. "Which is?"

"Conventional, and cautious."

Her lips parted; her straining, pained eyes never left his face.

She listened to him with a tense, almost a childlike attention.

"Conventional?" she whispered.

"Aren't you? Aren't you actually uncomfortable sometimes in the rather bizarre situations you let yourself in for?"

"Situations?" She seemed able only to echo him.

"Why, yes. Because yesterday wasn't the first. Was it?"

"First what?"

"Attempt of that sort. Adventure, flirtation, whatever you like to call it. You've been tinkering with that kind of thing for some time."

"You have known?" Her lips barely breathed the words. For almost the first time in years her tone was simple and sincere.

"My dear Theo, I have known—you. An incurable romantic. What did you take me for? A fool?"

She hardly heard him. He had known! The other little secret teas and dinners, the furtive hand pressures, the one or two equivocal kisses, all her little tawdry attempts to eke out a glamour for her life—all this he had known. "And you didn't care?"

"No. I haven't cared."

"That means, I suppose, you haven't loved me." Her voice trailed off; her head went down on her hands.

He patted her bright hair. "On the contrary, I love you very much. Why should you think I don't?"

Her next words came muffled from the shelter of her arms.

"You can say you love me, and yet not mind my flirting with other men."

"That shows the kind of books you've been reading." He tried to raise her head, but for once she resisted him. "How can this play-flirting of yours affect you in your relation to me? You're none the less charming, amiable—*domestic*." He laughed at her exclamation of horror. "You see, there's the crux of the whole matter. I have perfect confidence in your fundamental domesticity. I know you so well. Know you as, at bottom, what you are most afraid of being—an adorable philistine."

"I'm not, oh, I'm not," she asserted between her sobs.

"Yes, you are, and a sentimentalist. But I can easily forgive you both these things. I can relish them, in fact. They are part of your charm. What I couldn't forgive as readily would be certain qualities which are usually considered virtues. Too much independence, too much intelligence. Or—ugliness. Now you see—how unheroic I am, how reactionary, how mid-victorian?"

He put out his cigarette and lifted her into his arms. "Entertain as many Houghtons as you like, my dear, provided that you reserve me your evenings."

She stared up at him with wide, tearful eyes in which the shrunken image of herself loomed large; but with all the while that clinging of her hands and yielding of her body which she had learned pleased him.

Good-humouredly he bent and kissed her tear-stained, lovely face. "Let's forget all this. What do the Houghtons matter? After all, you belong to me."

A Poem in Prose

By Dennison Varr

TWO men set out together. One chose to amass wealth, the other to write poetry. At the end of twenty years the first had raised a million and a pretty daughter. The second had seventy sonnets to his credit.

One day they met.

"What can your poetry bring you?" asked the first. "My money will get me anything."

But the first man's daughter read the poetry of the second, became enamoured of him and secretly married him. Shortly afterwards, the first man died of gout, leaving all his wealth to his daughter. The poet took charge of the cheque book, built a costly mausoleum for the dead man and wrote a charming epitaph for him.



Quiet Days

By Muna Lee

QUIET evenings when you are here,
Long days that we are apart,
The thought of you clings close and dear
As ivy to my heart.

Yet I go silent through my days,
Lest speech should do you wrong.
You are too close to me for praise,
You are too near for song.



WHEN a woman becomes vivacious and gay, there is some man to thank.
When a man becomes moody and morose, there is some woman to thank.



HAPPY is the man who abhors blondes, loathes brunettes, and can't bear red-headed women.

The Hope Chest

By *L. M. Hussey*

SHE answered "yes"; the word floating from her full lips upon an ecstasy of slowly expressed breath. This was the reality of a fervently dreamed instant.

Her thrilling sense of victory and her appreciation of achievement were so engrossing that she gave no more than a passive response to his kisses that now followed her affirmative. She felt the touch of his lips, she was conscious of the circle of his enclosing arms, yet her supreme emotion was not physical; his kisses were only the contenting accompaniment of her mental exaltation.

She had striven arduously for this moment, intrigued him with every little trick she could command, endlessly endeavoured to make herself glamorous and lend a mystery to even her most intimate instants. At last it had sufficed to capture him and soon she would be married.

Realizing that her abstraction was beginning to surprise him, she put aside, for the time, her absorbing contemplation of victorious fulfillment and talked to him again.

"I'm so proud of you," she whispered. "We'll be wonderfully happy together."

He pressed her plump hands.

"Of course," he responded. "I know we will. You're the dearest—"

His caressing words were almost lost to her in a new delight she had, observing the eagerness in his young eyes. She experienced an embracing warmth in this knowledge of being desired. There was no flaw to these moments; each second fully measured as she had dreamed it.

He looked very young to her then;

but that did not matter. A few months before, when he had made his initial visits to her home, she had felt a certain shrinking, a peculiar uncertainty about his youth—he was obviously younger than herself. In a way it had not been easy to build up hopes upon so young a man. She had found difficulty in arousing enough of her own confidence—the confidence for a determined attack. But he was persistent. He called on her repeatedly. His visits took on a significance.

Looking at his face now, she enjoyed the candour of his brown eyes, the unlined forehead above, the thick mass of rather long dark hair that he combed straight back. She could be proud of him; he was fully adequate to exhibit for the envy of her friends.

His youth gave a profound tenderness to her emotions; with an almost grateful gesture she raised her hands and pressed her palms against his cheeks.

"Why did you wait so long?" she exclaimed. "Why didn't we know about our love for each other before?"

He smiled.

"We have all our life," he assured her.

"Yes, but I want you *now*; I want to see you every day—and tomorrow you have to go away."

"Only a month," he reminded her.

"A month!" Her voice was reproachful. "A month to wait after this wonderful evening; a whole month to wait until I'll see you again—and hear you say all those sweet things again."

"I'll write them to you every day!" She withdrew her hands; she turned

half around on the sofa, away from him, pretending a sudden anger.

"I'm mad at you!" she exclaimed, but her voice was coloured with an endearing inflection.

She felt his arms around her again.

"Don't say that! Why do you say that?"

"Because you're going to let nasty *business* separate us *now*!"

He pressed close to her.

"That's so I can make money for you and me," he whispered.

She found these words delightful, and she turned to him again with a radiant smile.

They began to talk of their future, planned how they would live, how their hours would pass, all the delight they would find in each other.

It was much later than usual when he arose to go, and the parting, especially because of the separation impending, was difficult to achieve.

When the door was closed at last, she pressed her face against the glass panel, watching him go down the steps, following him with her happy eyes until he had disappeared entirely. With a deep sigh she turned back into the hall and after a second's hesitation began to mount the stairs.

She went directly to her room.

Turning on the light, she stood just inside the door, her eyes half closed, her hands crossed and pressed against her breast. She enjoyed the warm languour that seemed to enclose her then, as with a magic mantle. Her sensation was of one who stops at last to rest, after the accomplishment of a task difficult and long. Entirely motionless within her room, she let this feeling of sublimated success pass over her whole body, as if it were a subtle substance, pulsing with each heart-beat in her blood.

Then, as she widened her eyes at last, they encountered a familiar rectangular box, drawn up close to the pendant covers of her small bed.

It was a significant sight; a symbol. Her hope chest! She smiled eagerly, and running across the room, raised the

lid. The breath of air that rose up was perfumed, and the garments within, meticulously laid one upon another, had never before filled her eyes with such a precious aspect.

—Almost reverently she stooped and took up a little chemise in the tips of her fingers. It was the last offering she had made to the chest—and it surprised her when she realized how long that had been. More than a month before the first meeting with Fred!

A pink ribbon of the silk chemise curled about her fingers; she held the soft garment idly as her mind went back in retrospection.

It was startling how much her hopes, during the past year, had dwindled. So long a time since she had placed any of these pretty things in the little perfumed box!

She recalled the early days of her hope chest—the accumulation of its store had begun five years back. There followed an eager several years when she had almost religiously added to its treasures. Then it had seemed more easy to capture a man . . .

And now she had Fred . . .!

He came to her at the ebb of her dreams, during days of sustained depression. And now, remembering her past disappointments, she was not without her wonder at his coming. In a vague way she felt grateful, grateful to her destiny, to her fortunes, to some obscure, higher power. . . .

Closing the lid of her hope chest, she began to disrobe slowly. She crossed the room, and standing in front of a narrow, full-length mirror, set in the panel of the closet door, she regarded herself indulgently.

During the past five years she had been growing quite plump. She noticed that her cheeks were entirely round, her chin curved with a slight billow, her arms somewhat heavy above the elbows.

She smiled complacently, recalling how this rounding of her figure had formerly brought her apprehensions. Many men preferred women of her type. Fred was undoubtedly one of this sort.

II

THERE was a very affectionate parting and then her lover started on his trip West. Her eyes were moist as she watched him through the gate and saw him finally enter the Pullman. Afterward the depression of these parting moments lifted.

Her future was full of prospects. She no longer felt envious of women whom she met on the street when they passed with their men. Now she experienced a certain unconfessed comradeship with these women who had secured their men—but not entirely an equality. She entertained a comforting apprehension of her superior fortune. She was proud of Fred. He was younger, he was better looking, he was more ardent than other women's men.

His letters arrived every day and they were read again and again; repeating his endearing terms aloud, in a soft voice, she imagined his own lips saying them, she saw his face close to her own murmuring these sweet phrases, and she thrilled with an intimate delight. Like sacramental tokens the letters were each laid in a scented box, where the little pile gradually grew up taller, an augmenting testimony of his affection. Every day she answered him faithfully.

After the passage of several weeks it developed that his stay in the West would be somewhat longer than they had anticipated—a month longer, perhaps. She was naturally disappointed, but the further wait did not depress her.

In a measure she would regret the passing of these expectant days, however desired might be the culmination of her plans. There was a delicate tremulousness to these hours, a sweetness of expectancy, that made them precious. She knew she would always remember the month or two of waiting, with no one to think of but him, and long, warm hours to dream!

Now he began to speak of being very busy; his letters grew shorter. This

did not disturb her at first, inasmuch as it was a proof of his eagerness to return. Nevertheless, in a few days she began to find a distinct dissatisfaction in his brief notes and in the increasingly perfunctory manner in which he wrote them.

One day there was no letter at all.

This aroused her fears, but the following day a long and satisfying communication arrived, charged with affection, almost extravagant with sweet phrases, and telling of the efforts he was making to complete his work and come back to her. She blamed herself for her fears, for her hazy suspicions, for her day of disturbing doubts. They were not worthy of him.

His notes grew shorter again; two days passed without any word from him at all; there followed another letter of exuberant affection.

And then he did not write for a week.

After the second day she began to telegraph; she wrote frantically two or three times each day; put special delivery stamps on her square, pink envelopes. No appeal brought any response.

Meanwhile, her logical fears assailed her like demons; they came in legions, until no conquering force of her assurance was sufficient to oppose their numberless despairs. All her past experiences, her dozen disappointments, came vividly into her mind, filling her with acute forebodings.

At last his letter came.

She read it, her face paled a little, her hands dropped in her lap and the note fluttered to the floor.

"Forgive me," he told her. "I didn't realize that age made any difference. But now I find that you're older than I, and it seems to me we'd never be happy. I've tried to keep my word and to keep out of my mind someone that I happened to meet just by an accident here. But now I find she and I are meant for each other. I will always admire you—a woman like you can always find a good man. . . ."

III

It surprised her after a time to discover how few tears she had shed upon the knowledge of her disaster. Her reaction was more one of numbness and bitterness, not an acute grief. It seemed to her that against her fortunes there was directed an almost personal malevolence that revealed itself in the persistent shattering of her dreams. Some sardonic opposition loomed up in life, invisible but potent—almost the symbol of life itself. There were long hours when she hated to live, when she hated life and every gesture of the living.

Again she felt immensely alone; there was no prospect, nor any visions. Once or twice, when her eyes encountered the hope chest, a surge of passionate anger mounted upward through her body; the sight was hateful to her and she always turned away in haste.

But gradually her emotions became more subdued and moments of unexpectedly comforting thoughts brought her a new poise.

The adventure with Fred had not culminated in a total disaster. To a certain degree he must have loved her. She had lost him in a way that any woman might lose a man—through absence, through inability to intrigue him with her calculated charm: this should not cause her shame.

However, she was surprised to find fresh hopes coming up into her mind, giving little, fluttering significances to certain moments and dreams when she lay in bed at night. If she had found Fred—and lost him by so little fault of her own—it might be that she was becoming more desirable to men; there were other Freds in the world!

One evening, with nothing before her until bedtime, she had decided on a couple of hours at the moving pictures.

She went to the nearest picture theater and was soon interested in a sentimental screen drama that alternately brought moisture to her eyes, made her laugh and filled her full of soft wishings. She was seated near the aisle; there was an empty chair beside her.

The picture was a little more than half completed when someone pushed in to occupy the seat at her side. She stood up with some irritation; it was not until she resumed her chair again that a side-long glance revealed the newcomer as a young man.

At once the picture no longer absorbed her; there were more important realities. Her glance had been reciprocated and her eyes met his, slightly chatoyant in the darkness.

She turned her head quickly and fastened her gaze upon the screen, seeing nothing. She felt that his eyes were searching her face; in another second she looked at him again.

Once more their glances met. This time he smiled. He leaned toward her and his coat sleeve brushed lightly against her arm.

"Good evening," he murmured. "I'm glad to find you here. . . ."

She felt her cheeks flushing. She giggled a little.

"What's the use of pretending that you know me?" she asked.

"Don't let's pretend then," he answered at once. "Let's suppose we've just met each other."

"I don't know that I'll like you . . ."

"Well, give me a trial!"

He leaned closer, resting his elbow on the chair arm.

He turned half around and gave his head an intimate inclination.

"Tell me what the picture's all about?" he asked.

These words put her at ease and gave a ready opening for conversation.

She began to relate the plot of the drama, in so far as it had been divulged from the screen. All the time her heart beat faster, her cheeks felt warmer and she was conscious of a stirring delight. It was almost as if some unspoken prayer of hers had been answered; this one had come so quickly!

Like a voyager on a magic carpet, her florid imagination leapt into the future, conceiving the most sweetly intimate consequences of this sudden encounter. It did not matter that his name was still unknown, that his fea-

tures were still dim and uncertain, that none of the circumstances of his life had been revealed. She felt an entire assurance; he liked her or he would never have spoken.

She affected an immense naïveté and sweetness; her voice was low and full of musical modulations.

When the picture was completed they both stood up to go; she slipped her arm through the crook of his own, with a naïve trustfulness. As they emerged to the street, and the glare of the outer lights fell over them, they turned to each other in curiosity. In this instant of first, adequate scrutiny, she found no lessening of her pleasure.

In a way, he reminded her of Fred—the memory of Fred brought no bitter thoughts. Although the configuration of his features was naturally different, there was a reminiscence of Fred in the colour of his eyes, the thick, dark hair, and a certain boyish carriage of his head. Like Fred, he was young.

They had only a short distance to walk to her apartment. Her father, a silent, self-effacing old man, was already in bed, and the sibilant sound of his respiration hissed softly in the apartment like the escape of gas from an unlighted jet.

She took the young man into the living room; two windows and a door with glass panels opened out upon the small porch, and the light of an arc lamp streamed in through these transparencies, giving to the room a subdued glow. She did not turn on the light.

"Don't you think it's nicer this way?" she asked.

Without waiting for his confirming assent, she seated herself on a couch, pushed close against the side wall.

In another instant he joined her; they turned toward each other, they both smiled; he put out his hand and his fingers closed over her own.

She did not resist. She allowed him to draw her closer; he kissed her and she returned with her own the pressure of his lips.

For more than an hour they sat together, saying very little, and exchan-

ging these caresses. Occasionally she stroked his hair with her plump hands, smoothed his cheeks and smiled close to his face.

She was deeply content, almost languid, in the calm of one who had passed from the turbulency of severe pain to a nirvana of ease. She was wholly assured; she felt that she could give him all his desire, in the warmth of her affection and the persistence of her possible love.

When he rose to go at last it seemed to her that she was parting from an old companion, a lover of many years. The utmost intimacy had come to these two since the moment of their recent meeting.

"You'll be sure and come tomorrow evening?" she asked.

He hesitated an instant.

She threw back her head and offered her lips.

"Yes . . ." he consented.

They embraced again at the door and she watched him go out into the night.

Turning back into the hall, she walked slowly to her room. The moon had come up and it lighted the little chamber with a glow of magic suggestion. A straight beam fell over the hope chest, enclosing it in a luminescent aura.

She smiled in delighted languor and faint little thrills ran up and down her back. With her lips still curved in the content and promise of this hour, she slowly prepared for bed.

IV

THE next day passed delightfully in hours of anticipation. Her curiosity had asserted itself; she realized how little she knew about her new friend; there were so many interesting details to learn!

This evening, she knew, they would talk more, and in the exchange of their confidences grow closer to each other. Now and then she marveled at the swiftness of her happy fortune.

After dinner she dressed carefully, putting on a frock that she believed

subdued her plumpness a little. She waited for him in the living room.

At eight o'clock he had not come. Going to the porch she looked up and down the street in a faint anxiety.

Returning then to the room, she endeavoured to interest herself in a magazine story, but put the book down at last, unable to concentrate on the author's tale. She got up and walked around the room.

It was half-past eight.

By nine-thirty she gave up her last hope.

Nevertheless, a week passed before she admitted the full devastation of the fact. He was never coming back again! She waited for him every evening, and each night, disappointed, tearful, she went to bed with a deeper and deeper depression.

A week of this and she could not fail to understand. He had amused himself with her for an evening, he had lied about coming again, and he had gone out with never a purpose of returning to her.

Her bitterness came back and it showed itself in her face, hardened the lines of her full lips, twitched her nostrils to a faint, ascetic curve, and coloured even the quality of her voice. She felt that she hated all men; yet she knew inwardly her immeasurable desire of one!

Several weeks later, as she was sitting at breakfast with her father, she was surprised to observe him smiling at her with a peculiarly significant grin.

She scowled a little and questioned him:

"What's the matter with you?"

"Listen," he said. "I want you to get up a *very* nice little dinner tonight. I'm bringing somebody here. . . ."

He grinned again, mysteriously.

"Old sport," he went on. "Good old boy. Widower. Lots of money. *Your* chance, girlie!"

He arose and walked slowly out of the room, pausing to take his hat from the rack in the hall. She could hear him chuckling over his idea as he went down the stairs. Taking up the dishes

from the table, she frowned in resentment. But after a time she became more curious; she wondered whom her father was bringing home; perhaps what he said was true; An old widower . . . lots of money . . . she smiled a little.

There might be some amusement. . . .

Later in the day her interest increased and her thoughts grew more serious.

After all, it was somewhat plain that young men did not appreciate her; they lacked the experience to estimate her worth, to foresee her capability of devotion, to comprehend the steadfastness of her affection. An older man, knowing some of the disillusionment of having lived, could appreciate her.

She paused in the work of the moment, looked down at the floor a second and then, elevating her shoulders, she sighed. An older man! Even for her, that would be a lesson in disillusionment.

Nevertheless, she followed her father's suggestion—she prepared an excellent dinner. She was in the kitchen when she heard her father coming up the stairs to the apartment, the murmur of a strange voice sounding with his own.

She ran hurriedly to her room, looked in the mirror, tucked up some flying wisps of hair, powdered her nose and cheeks, and then reappeared slowly with a smile on her face. She stepped into the living room and found her father and his friend together. They both stood up.

"Hallowell, my daughter," said her father.

They shook hands.

She was not disappointed. She had steeled herself to meet an even older man—he was not so bad! His hair was quite gray, but his face was ruddy, the complexion looked fresh, his smile was agreeable and she liked his authoritative air. He pressed her hand intimately.

"The old sport here has told me a book full about you," he said.

She laughed.

"Don't believe him!" she exclaimed.

They chatted a few further seconds and then, excusing herself, she ran off to the kitchen to take up the matter of the dinner. A moment later her father appeared and began to mix cocktails. He also produced a bottle of Madeira. The cork was dithdrawn with a pleasant pop.

"We'll have this after the cocktails," he said. "The old boy is very fond of wine."

"Why haven't you had him here before?" she asked.

"Haven't seen him for ten years," he explained. "Just turned up in these parts last week. You'll like him."

They called their guest and dinner began.

After a short time the wine was poured and everyone found it very agreeable. Hallowell developed considerable wit and told two or three amusing stories. At first, however, the conversation was mainly carried on by the two men, who were in a reminiscent mood. Later the visitor seemed more attracted to the girl; he began to smile at her; they found themselves laughing at each other's words. A fresh bottle of wine appeared.

It came to her suddenly that Hallowell's eye had a new glisten; his face was flushed; the wine was affecting him.

She glanced at her father; he had not spoken for some minutes and now she observed his head nodding. His cigar hung limply between his two fingers and she knew he would presently be sound asleep.

Hallowell followed her eyes, and then, their glances meeting, they smiled at each other significantly. The visitor stood up, and coming around the table, sat down in a chair at her side.

With an eager light in her eyes, she poured him a fresh glass of wine. He held up the glass to her and she took a sip, whereat he drained it.

"Poor father has fallen by the way-side, hasn't he?" she asked.

Hallowell laughed rather foolishly and made a gesture to touch her; she

drew back and his hand fell short, just brushed her dress, and dropped to his knees. She arose quickly and beckoned to him.

"Let's go in the front room," she said, "where we won't disturb him."

He followed her, a little unsteadily, and in the living room they sat down together on the couch.

For a few moments they were silent; she was the first to speak.

"It's too bad we never met before," she said.

"Had no idea there was anything like you at home," he said. "I'd have been here years ago."

She laughed softly.

"You seem terribly fond of the girls!"

"Fond of the right one."

She began to question him, flatter him with her interest, to encourage his confidences.

After a time, running out for a moment, she returned with two fresh glasses of wine. They drank each other's health. Old Hallowell drew closer to her.

He put out his arm, circled her shoulder and endeavoured to kiss her. She pushed him away.

"What's th' matter?" he inquired, elevating his white eyebrows in surprise.

"Don't do that!"

"Why? Can' we be friends?"

"Yes, but I don't want you to do that."

"'Fraid of me?"

"No, indeed."

"Don't like me?"

"Certainly I like you!"

He leaned forward again.

"Just a little—"

She pulled away.

"No, no! Be nice now!"

"Why not?"

She dropped her eyes demurely.

"Well," she said, "it isn't right. It isn't fair. I want to save all that for the man I'll marry sometime."

He blinked at her steadily for several seconds. A significant smile spread over his features.

"Not got 'im picked out yet, have

you?" he asked. "I'm a pretty good old boy. What do you think of me?"

She regarded him seriously, but inwardly her elated heart beat faster and her cheeks coloured slowly with the emotion of impending success.

"What do you mean?" she inquired, voicing her question softly.

"Wha's the matter with me?" he asked. "Won't I do? I just *want* a littl' thing like you!"

She straightened, and fastening her eyes upon his face, spoke to him gravely.

"Do you mean that you want to marry me?"

"Certainly!"

This time she let him enclose her in his arms and she received a clumsy kiss.

She had some difficulty in extricating herself from his eager embraces, but it was necessary to confirm her victory.

She questioned him again, she made him repeat his proposal in several ways—and she gave him her consent. After this she suffered his further caresses.

Later in the evening she helped him out into the hall, found his hat, steadied him down the stairs, and at the door eluded his ineffectual attempt to kiss her good-night.

"Tomorrow!" she exclaimed, laughing.

He turned away and she saw him descend to the pavement.

Running upstairs, she turned out the light in the dining room, where her father was still sleeping. Then she went directly to her room. She was very sleepy herself; the wine was affecting her like an opiate.

She lay down on her bed, and without undressing fell into a dreamless slumber.

V

SHE awoke late the next morning. Her head ached a little, her senses were heavy and she felt horribly mused.

For some minutes she did not recall the happenings of the previous night. Then, pausing in her toilet, she looked

thoughtfully at the floor. At last she was going to be married! No thrill of delight came to her, although there was a satisfaction in the thought. He was an old man—she had had dreams of another sort! She sighed. Then, a smile appearing, her activity returned. It was a compromise—but at least she had a man!

It was noon when the débris of the past evening was cleaned away. She dressed then and went out to do some shopping. Now she was wondering whether he would come that evening. Had her father seen him today? Had he confessed anything? How would he greet her when he came?

Her interest increased and her faint shrinking disappeared. Moreover, a certain thought comforted her. She knew the ways of young men; it was better, after all, to have an older one. They were less flighty, more reliable: Hallowell was old enough to appreciate a woman of her character.

The afternoon was half spent when she returned to the apartment.

Pausing at the door, she ran her hand into the small mail box and found a letter. It was addressed to her, in a strange hand. She took it upstairs with her and laid it on her dressing-table to be read after she had dressed for the evening.

Presently, however, her curiosity made her take up the envelope and open it. She read the letter word for word and then, ripping it angrily in two pieces, she dropped the torn sheets to the floor. It was from Hallowell, and he had mailed it early that morning.

"I hope you'll forget all the foolishness of last night," he said. "I had too much of that good wine. Accept my sincerest apologies. I hope to see you again some time before I go away from this city. Give my best regards to your father."

Turning slowly, staring downward, her eyes encountered the small, rectangular hope chest. Her cheeks flushed and her anger flared intensely. What a ridiculous object it was! A hope chest!

A lot of good clothes that she never wore!

With a determined step she crossed the room and raised the lid. Deliberately selecting the little chemise that lay on top, she pulled off the garment she was wearing and slipped the chemise over her shoulders. She tightened the pink ribbons with angry jerks. It seemed to her that some immeasurable absurdity had kept these clothes from legitimate use.

Turning to the mirror she saw her reflected image, with the ribbons of the little chemise dangling on her bosom, and the shoulder frills touching her plump white arms. A sudden surprise assailed her. She stared earnestly at the mirrored garment. This was one of the little pieces from her *hope chest*!

Her mouth dropped open a little, her eyelids fell, and a dizzy wheel seemed to turn her head in distracting revolutions. She stepped back from the mirror. Some enormity had been committed. She had desecrated the hope chest; she was wearing the pretty symbols treasured there!

Then she understood and the full measure of her despair rushed upon her like an inundating wave. She knew the folly of any more hope, of any further saving, in a scented little box, toward the hour of her dreams' fulfillment. Her sobs broke the stillness of the room, her tears overflowed her eyes and in a spasm of passionate weeping she threw herself upon the bed.

The lid of the hope chest remained open, forlornly abandoned.



Interpretation

By Luis Muñoz Marin

THESE are singing things:

The stars,
The sea,
Lovers. . . .

These are silent things:

The night,
The sands,
Love. . . .



A MAN likes to think that, when he marries, all his old sweethearts will be heartbroken. Instead, they will probably be too busy pitying the bride.



A WOMAN can forgive God anything save a shiny nose.



The Exquisite Episode

By Helen Woljeska

THEY were giving short plays by Dunsany.

Ransford, tall, slim, brown, and excessively well groomed, had an orchestra chair.

His mind wandered . . .

Before him sat a young woman in a *purée marron* chiffon blouse. A delicate perfume emanated from her.

"Violettes de Parme, Legrand—" appraised Ransford. He was a connoisseur in things feminine.

On the stage, gods and beggars were stalking.

"Dunsany . . ." thought Ransford, "Dunsany . . . He always puts me in mind of Andersen's tale of 'The King's New Clothes.' I'm afraid I'm like the indecent little girl . . ."

He yawned discreetly.

Suddenly he became conscious of the fact that somebody was looking at him—must have been looking at him for some time—

He sent his rather melancholy eyes roving over the audience, his nostril already scenting adventure, while the droop of his mouth mocked at himself . . .

It was not long before he discovered the source of his queer sensation. In one of the boxes sat a woman of imperious manner whose large, brilliant eyes were fixed upon him with steadfast and mysterious smile.

And at once his eyes answered, plunging into hers and holding them with questioning challenge.

Slowly, gravely, she bowed.

He answered with eagerness.

And her beautiful white hand beckoned him to her side.

Just then a storm of applause broke loose. The *purée marron* blouse heaved ecstatically. Ransford was enveloped in clouds of Violettes de Parme.

He arose.

He walked up the aisle, turned the corner, picked his way to the box.

As he entered, the curtain came down for the entr'acte and the house flamed up in a sea of light. *En silhouette*, like the statue of some dusky amber goddess, he saw the magnificent stranger sitting before him. With the stately grace of an empress she stretched out her hand in greeting. He bowed over it. Then took the seat by her side.

"I am glad you came," she said with a low, vibrant voice. "The moment I happened to see you I knew that you would fit into the circle of my life—and once I find some one like that, I do not wish to lose him again without at least a passing word . . ."

"I feel sure that we shall be friends and understand each other very well indeed—" he murmured.

But the mocking smile which was so becoming to his mouth and eyes played across his face.

It seemed to please her. She smiled back, a swift, triumphant caress in her eyes.

"Does it not seem as though we were two masks, addressing one another during some brilliant Venetian carnival?" she asked. "To me, you see, life appears a strange and sumptu-

ous pageant, in which mysterious beings, masked and draped in secretive dominos, meet—sometimes revealing in a glance, a smile, the treasures they carry hidden under sable folds of somber conventions . . . If a congenial spirit sees—he understands, he beckons, he knows: here is the possibility of wonderful joys . . . Of course it happens that one makes mistakes. One imagines beckoning to a prince—and he proves to be but a crude clown. Still it is worth the trying."

"I agree with you. My life is nothing, if not a quest for the rare and the beautiful. In my search for that I would not mind some day breaking my heart."

"Yes. Breaking the heart—" she murmured. "For, of course, one has to pay for whatever one enjoys . . . even for such common things as food and drink . . . how much more for all the delights congenial intercourse can yield! Our heart's blood is not too high a price for them. I, for one, am always willing to squander mine for companionship, friendship, love . . ."

"Love—" he repeated—"love—Does that word have the same meaning for any two human beings—or are there as many different conceptions of it as there are men and women?"

"What does it mean to you?" she asked.

"I have never found that love of which I carry a dim ideal somewhere in my head or heart. When I find it I shall experience the most exquisite episode of my life. Now I merely know that what I mean by love does not in the least resemble either the domesticated or the lurid emotion people about me seem to call by that name. You, perhaps, can tell me? You seem a woman of free and daring intellect."

She lowered her lids.

"Yes," she said, "I am a free woman. But that does not mean that I am free . . . I do not bow before any of the conventions and rules and dogmas of society—but I do bow before my own laws. And the more I

listen to their dictation, the more clearly defined and imperious grows their voice.

"And may one hear what those laws are?"

She had again raised her lids and looked into his face, but at the half sad lines about his mouth rather than at the mocking glitter of his eyes. And she spoke gently, patiently, indulgently, as one speaks to a child.

"My laws teach me not to revere the letter, but only the spirit. Not to revere a marriage certificate, but only love. And love has to legitimize itself by proving irresistible—not by some written permit given out like a dog license."

He laughed. "Splendid. And once it has legitimized itself—you follow it wherever it leads—"

"Even to death." Her eyes glowed proudly. "For whenever a woman loves, she plays with the possibility of a terrible and shameful death. That gives an added tremour men know nothing about."

"It seems to me you teach me to understand your conventional sisters rather than yourself. What is it that makes love seem worth while to you in spite of all its dangers and terrors?"

"But what *else* is there to live for?" she in turn asked him. "Nothing can reconcile a woman to the fact that she has to live at all, to suffer, to fade, to die—nothing but the knowledge that she was allowed to bring romance and tenderness and ecstasy into the lives of some beloved men."

"Romance and tenderness and ecstasy," he mocked, "not to forget sorrow and grief and despair."

"Never deliberately," she replied with fervour.

He laughed lightly.

"But you were to tell me what the exquisite love is like . . . Then, to resume: after you have found the friend who, you know without a doubt, is truly yours, and your heart has called to him, and he has come—what then?"

"Then—" she said—"we live for the

present moment only, we make our love supreme in its charm, different from any other that has gone before or must come after by being supremely, defiantly ourselves. We reach up to the stars and down into our own deepest depths for jewels to adorn. We scorn the cheap makeshifts of subterfuge and half-truths. And we drink the glowing wine of joy and terror together in perfect understanding, faith, and devotion—until—until—” She halted.

He took her up. “Until—until—! There is the sentimental stumbling block! There is the worm on the most gorgeous rose! ‘Until—until—’ Why did you not have the courage to finish: ‘until we have bored ourselves to death!’? This ‘until’ shows that the modern free woman, the rebel, *l’affranchie*, is at heart just as timid and convention-bound as her mid-Victorian sister. The only difference is that what the one professed for her husband the other professes for her lover or for several lovers in proper chronological sequence: a long drawn out, strenuous faithfulness, the willingness to share drab every-day struggles, a mass of utilitarian, gross, ugly things which, by their very ugliness, seem to you to impart a sanctifying halo to a passion which otherwise might appear too beautifully pagan and untrammelled.

“Ah, I see, even you look horrified. For I am attacking woman’s holiest of holiest—Time! Time alone, in her eyes, can raise a passion above frivolity. How absurd! How utterly irrelevant! Why drag in time and even eternity? The essential is not how long a passion lasts, but how deep, how wonderful, how unique it is. Is love a piece of cloth that it should be judged according to its durability? Is it not rather a most fragile work of art, a cobwebby lace, a rapturous song—to be judged by its grace and subtlety, its fire and perfume, its magic and intensity? What do I care how many other men a woman has loved and will love—just

so she brings me supreme rapture while I hold her in my arms? I can imagine a love that would not outlast an hour and still be the most sublime experience of a life-time. I can imagine a woman of the most subtle and exquisite charm, crowding all her witchery, fire and tenderness into one short hour—and then passing on, never again to return—leaving behind her an exquisite vision which no after mood can modify, no lesser sequence destroy . . . That is my ideal: *la dame qui passe!* Do you think that a woman like that can be found in this world?”

The beautiful stranger’s eyes had grown very dark.

“Perhaps—” she whispered—“perhaps . . .”

II

THE curtain had descended for the last time.

Ransford stood beside the woman of the mysterious smile and helped her into her gorgeous evening wraps. And as his arms enfolded her he suddenly knew beyond a doubt that this woman could be, that she must be, his most exquisite episode. Already he saw the light of tenderness glorifying her beauty, mingling with the somber flame of passion in her velvet eye, with the exultant smile of triumph on her imperious lip. And as he bent his face close to hers, he whispered a request that was almost a command in its eagerness and assurance.

But she drew back.

A shadow of grief passed over her proud face, leaving it strangely altered. “Beloved—” she whispered. “I want to be the episode most exquisite in your whole life . . . And to be that—I must forever remain—a dream . . .”

Freeing herself from his arms, she left the box and disappeared in the crowd.

And Ransford stood motionless.

He let her go.

For he knew that she was right.

Before the Dawn

(A Melodrama in One Act)

By Wilson Hicks

THE PERSONS:

MARJY

TOM

OLD TERRY, *who does not appear*

STATION MASTER

The scene is the waiting room of a village railway station; a small place, in keeping with a town of a few hundred persons. The ceiling is festooned with cobwebs; the walls have fairly curled under the heat of summer. A clock ticks in a crazy monotone and a pair of wall lamps burn reluctantly, giving hardly any light, but serving to stir up the persistent darkness. In the rear wall a square hole serves as ticket window, now closed. To the right and up from the window is a yellow, worn map; lower, to the left, a blackboard with a stick of chalk on a string. Doors are at either side of the room; one leads to the tracks, the other gives access to an outside stair which connects a room above, where there is a telegraph instrument. In a corner is a huge stove, its pipe writhing to a flue. The floor is rough and littered; the whole place is ancient, smelly, depressive. The only other furnishings are two grimy benches which huddle with their backs together in the middle of the room.

On one of the benches sits a girl, her head in her hands. She is silent. Steps descending the outside stair cause her to look up an instant, but she resumes her former pose, nor is she aroused further by the entrance of an aged, limping man, the station master,

who places against a wall a short ladder which he climbs, poking a key in the face of the clock. He glances at the girl as he goes out.

It is midsummer, on a night consumed except for that blackest part that just precedes the first intimation that day is waking. From out the darkness, in the door with the tracks beyond, appears Tom, a young man, his coat hanging from his arm, his necktie twisted. He stops short, gulps, apparently trying to overcome the frightened look on his face, which suggests he is tossed between attempted composure and a state of torment. He weakly places a foot on the floor.

TOM

(*In a whisper, moving unsteadily toward the girl.*) Marjy!

MARJY

(*The girl has risen, rushing to him.*) Tell me—what is it?

(*She yields to his embrace. They part, staring at each other a moment.*)

TOM

(*In a hollow voice.*) You look afraid. I'm—no, I'm not afraid. I shouldn't have left you alone so long. What you been doing? (*His eyes wander.*) Say, Marjy, I— (*He chokes back a sob.*)

MARJY

(*Earnestly.*) There must be something the matter. You don't act right. You didn't take long—but I was kinda sleepy—and (*vaguely*) Oh, I don't know. Everything's so funny. (*She*

bends toward him.) I did worry. What happened? What's he say?

TOM

(Pulling himself together under extreme effort.) I'm in a fix. *(He begins pacing the floor, glowering into space. He turns, his voice rising with determination.)* You and I got to do something and do it now. *(Madly.)* When's the train? God, Marjy, help me figure this out!

MARJY

(Mystified.) I don't understand. What on earth, Tom?

TOM

(Resignedly.) Well, I went over there. *(He stands still.)*

MARJY

Like you said.

TOM

(Almost inaudibly.) And I saw him. *(Suddenly losing grasp on himself he almost shouts.)* And, Marjy—all I know is I love you—and don't care. *(Pause. TOM partly regains control.)* When's the train?

MARJY

(She takes TOM's arm. They turn to bench.) You act like you've gone through something awful. *(TOM is shaken, his face ghastly in the dim light. They sit, MARJY peering at him. Then she almost cries out, noticing for the first time his frightened expression.)* Something has happened! You're not yourself!

TOM

Don't make any noise—not now. We've got to go through with this, and it's all me to blame—everything.

MARJY

I want to know. I must know.

TOM

(Jerkily.) I saw him. I went to his house. It was dark—the birds in this hole get up early all right—but

they're asleep this time of the morning. The old man hadn't locked his door—I tried it first, planning to break in otherwise. I lit matches—went in a lot of rooms—found his.

MARJY

Wasn't it scary?

TOM

He was asleep. *(TOM looks steadily at the floor.)* I didn't have no trouble finding him—what you'd told me about the place helped—so I shook him—he almost jumped out of bed. . . . I held him—put my hand on his mouth *(he shudders)*—I held him—and—

MARJY

What'd you say?

TOM

I asked him did he know you.

MARJY

You knew he did. What'd you ask him that for?

TOM

I didn't know where to begin. I hated him. I hated everything *(looks at her)* almost. I didn't care.

(TOM buries his face in his hands.)

MARJY

You told him what you wanted? Did he give it to you? Tell me—there's no use in all this. Did he say anything about me?

(Rising slowly, TOM begins his pacing again. Then he halts abruptly.)

TOM

When's the train, I say?

MARJY

Why do you keep asking me? It's through here at four o'clock. Once in a while somebody catches it. Traveling men do, every night or so. The ticket seller ain't on duty, though. We'll have to pay the conductor.

TOM

And that's the only train there is—until noon tomorrow, ain't it?

MARJY

Yes, Tom.

TOM

(Desperately.) We've got to get this one. I wouldn't hang around here any longer than I'd have to.

MARJY

And we can go only where we want to go on the train that's coming in pretty soon. (Looks at clock.) It's ten minutes to four now.

TOM

(Absently.) Ten minutes to four.
(With a start.) Ten minutes to four!
(He drops heavily onto the bench.)

MARJY

Won't you be glad when we're away from here—and get down on the oil lands—and you can work hard—and before long—

TOM

I can't hear no more of that! You haven't helped me figure this out yet!

MARJY

(Helplessly.) But how can I when you won't tell me what's the trouble?

TOM

(His head drops.) Marjy—

MARJY

Tell me, right now.

TOM

You know what we came here for, don't you? You know you and me talked things over before we left the city—where I had a job and everything was all right?

MARJY

You're not giving up?

TOM

No. But you don't know. (Grimly.) You don't know I've failed.

MARJY

Failed! Then you didn't get noth-

ing over at Old Terry's? He didn't give you nothing?

TOM

(Echoing.) He didn't give me nothing.

MARJY

(Beginning to weep.) Can't we get away, then? What'll we do? We had only enough money to get here and nowhere else. No place to sleep—nothing to eat—and we were counting on—

TOM

(Making an awkward attempt to console her, but soon dropping his hands from about her shoulders.) It ain't you needs consoling, Marjy. I need it—bad.

MARJY

If you don't tell me what you did over at Old Terry's, I'll—

TOM

When you told me about you and Old Terry we planned to see him, didn't we? We wanted to get away from that rotten room in the city—away from everybody—

MARJY

Yes, but go on.

TOM

So we planned to come here and see Old Terry. (Vacantly.) We came—and now we're in a fix—a terrible fix—

MARJY

I can't imagine what you think's so terrible about it.

TOM

When I saw him a while ago he said he knew he'd done something wrong to you, but that he was getting old and didn't care. He said for you to see him and maybe he'd talk something different.

MARJY

If you didn't get anything (she turns quickly on Tom) then what's the use of waiting for the train?

TOM

There's no reason to holler, Marjy. I picked up a few dollars over at Old Terry's even if he wouldn't give me nothing.

MARJY

(*As if lightning had struck nearby.*) You don't mean you stole? You didn't take anything that didn't belong to you?

TOM

Yes, I took something that didn't belong to me. It wasn't much. Only this—

(*He holds out a few dollars in his cupped hands.*)

MARJY

But, Tom, that's not like you. What'd you do it for? Oh, I never thought it of you. (*She sobs.*)

TOM

Wasn't like me, you say? No. And Old Terry wasn't like a man, either. If he had been he wouldn't done what he did. Look here, Marjy. You remember when we got married? How happy we were? I'm still happy with you, but I've had an awful fight to stay that way. You know what you told me?

MARJY

It's no time to talk of that now. The train—

TOM

(*Relentlessly.*) When you told me what happened after Old Terry raised you from a baby with no folks, after you'd grown up to be a big girl and pretty—and just starting out—(*he falters.*)

MARJY

(*Brokenly.*) But you never stole before.

TOM

No, and I never—Marjy! You know what any other kind of a husband would done, don't you? When you'd told any other fellow he'd probably left you in a minute. Maybe some guy would put his arms around you and said he would forget it, but few men

wouldn't sworn to get Old Terry and fix him once for all. (*Pause.*) Marjy—(*he breaks*) to think my little girl—

MARJY

(*Between sobs.*) I know no one else would have been like you, Tom—you looked over everything. But now—it seems like you've changed.

TOM

I never changed! I never was any other way. You told me Old Terry had ruined your life, and you waited until after we were married to tell me. He didn't ruin your life, did he?

MARJY

Not my life—no. You make up for that. But that's what they say of girls when—

TOM

And when you told me it was an old man you trusted, then him to do what he did—I felt he oughtn't to live.

MARJY

(*With a terrified cry.*) You say you felt like he shouldn't live?

(*TOM resumes his pacing.*) MARJY appears exhausted at trying to fathom the cause of his strange actions.)

TOM

(*Stopping.*) No, not that, Marjy. I knew he'd—done an awful—crime. I—I didn't know what to think.

MARJY

(*As in a dream.*) You stole first—and now you say you felt like he shouldn't live. (*Pause.*) That means you felt like—

TOM

(*Grasping his chance. An uncanny calmness has come upon him.*) I did kill him. I—

MARJY

Don't!

TOM

(*Determined to get it out now that he has begun.*) I did kill him. But I didn't mean to. I wouldn't have done

it—only for your sake, Marjy. He wanted to put me out when I asked him for money to let us get away on—just a little money for you. I told him you and me was married. I told him I'd just found out what he'd done to you. You remember—*(he smiles weirdly)* you told me it'd be all right to ask him for just a little?

MARJY

(Hysterically.) What'll we do? It's almost four o'clock now. Two minutes to four. The train—

TOM

I don't care about the train. I want this to be all right. I killed him—Oh, Marjy!

(The girl, helpless, strokes TOM's hair.)

MARJY

You stole—you killed him—because I told you *that*.

TOM

(Faintly.) He told me to get out. I told him I wouldn't go until he gave me something for you.

MARJY

But we could have gotten along somehow.

TOM

He went to the telephone to call the sheriff. I pushed him—too hard—he fell—his head struck. I didn't mean to—but he was old.

MARJY

Maybe you didn't kill him. Maybe you just thought so. *(They are silent an instant.)* Tom, I hear a train whistle.

TOM

We got to get away. The old man told me I better leave because his housekeeper comes early—about this time.

MARJY

But must we go? Hadn't we better stay? I never thought we'd ever be in such a terrible fix—and we were so happy. *(She sobs.)* Oh, I can't bear

it—I can't—to think that you— Oh, it's worse than death!

TOM

Why shouldn't we try to get away? *(He seizes her arm.)* Should we stay here?

MARJY

The people—the sheriff—everybody!

TOM

They'd all know we was strangers. They'd suspect us.

MARJY

The housekeeper may be finding him—

TOM

We won't have a chance when it's light.

MARJY

I can't understand it. It's all so awful. Why did it happen to me? To you? Why did you have to commit—Tom, I hear the whistle!

TOM

No, you didn't. . . . Was it, Marjy? *(Tom starts here, then there, not knowing what to do. The girl runs to the door with the tracks beyond.)*

MARJY

(Returning to him.) I know it's just around that bend! The headlight don't show yet—but *(she glances at the clock)* it's a little after four now—

TOM

That wasn't no whistle, was it? You imagined it, didn't you?

Footsteps are heard on the stair outside. They turn, trembling, to the door.

The station master enters, looks slowly at the couple, who follow him with their eyes. The aged man goes to the blackboard, runs his fingers down the string and takes hold of the chalk, which he fumbles. Then he recovers it, and lifting his arms as if the action pained him, he writes in a big, scrawly hand:

"NO. 4, DUE AT 4 A. M., TWO HOURS LATE."

Curtain.

The Little Gray Doves

By Joseph Upper

I

THE house of the little gray doves was long and narrow. The floor of it was of newspaper and the walls of it were bars. It had a gable roof, and somewhere among the bars of the long side wall was a door. There were no windows, of course, or rather you might say it was all windows. It was like a canary cage only much longer. It was really much higher, too, but it was so much longer that its length made it seem low. It sat on the floor of the Boy's room near the wall, and when the house was still and the door of the Boy's room was open you could hear the little gray doves jumping about on their perches even though you were downstairs in the sitting room.

Very early each morning the little gray doves called to each other that the day had arrived because they were happy to think that they should have another day of each other's company; and every evening they called to each other that the shadows were come because they were happy to think that they would be together through another night. During the day they did not call to one another, but hopped about on their perches or bathed, or ate and drank; and sometimes they made love to one another silently.

II

THE Youth slept in the Boy's bed. He was the second guest, so the spare room was already occupied. The Boy slept on a couch in the den. The Youth fell asleep quickly, for he was very

tired. All the evening he had listened to the Boy's father talking about the De Mons.

"They used to spell it 'Demon,'" thought the Youth, and it was true they did; but that was a long time ago. It had been De Mon for many years now and nearly everyone in the town thought they had always spelled it that way. They had it on all their stationery with a circle around it formed by the tail of the "n" and it was that way in the tile flooring of their office building and in the tile flooring of the hotel they had built, and they had had it painted on the walls of all their factories so that everyone could see it from the car windows as they passed through the town on the trains. The Youth had seen it when he came up that morning. It was in white letters on a black ground with the tail of the "n" forming a white circle around it—De Mon.

"Demon" was really more appropriate, the Youth thought, for they manufactured weapons and certainly that was a demon's trade, but nobody in the town ever thought of it in that way because everyone owed his living to the success of the business. So they all called it De Mon and talked about it a great deal and told stories about the various members of the family and all that they had done for the town.

It was these stories to which the Youth had been obliged to listen the whole evening, so that he quickly fell asleep in the Boy's bed without giving a thought to the little gray doves.

III

VERY early in the morning the little gray doves began calling to one another that the day had arrived, and because of the unfamiliar sound the Youth opened his eyes and lay blinking up at the ceiling of the Boy's room. Presently the little gray doves called to one another again, and he remembered them and turned over and lay looking down into their happy house with a smile on his lips and a crowd of busy thoughts peeping out of his eyes.

The little gray doves were not like any of the other inmates of house where he was the second guest. They did not talk to each other about the De Mons. Nor did the Youth as he lay there listening to their early morning conversation hear anything about the high cost of living, or the impertinence of the modern negroes, or the latest total for the Y. M. C. A. fund, or the new seven-cent street car fare or the proposed new bridge over Pebble Creek to replace the old one which had been thrice condemned.

The little gray doves were not talking about any of these things. Nor was there anything in their conversation about the war, or God, or the relation of one to the other, or the importance of the Church, or what a splendid man the Rev. Mr. Spillit was, or what a fine sermon he had preached last Sunday.

The little gray doves seemed to be wholly ignorant of these important things. They talked of the sunlight and of the shadows, of the trees they had once lived in and of their domestic happiness. They really talked very little, but their silence was full of the expression of their love for one another, and the Youth found them far more entertaining than any of the romantic novels he had read.

When the little gray doves perceived him looking at them, however, they seemed to know instinctively that he had been eavesdropping, so they broke off their morning conversation and

hopped about on their perches with an air of slightly offended hospitality.

The Youth slipped out of bed and the little gray doves eyed him curiously. When he threw off his pajamas, his mature, solid body presented a strange contrast to the slim white form of the Boy to the sight of which they were accustomed. The Youth wondered what they were thinking and wished that they had not discovered him listening to their morning chatter. When he was dressed and ready to go downstairs, he drew from his coat pocket a photograph which he always carried with him in a leather folder, and spoke to it in low, impassioned tones while the little gray doves strained their ears to hear the words he said. He had really aroused their curiosity, and besides they felt justified in giving him an exhibition of his own bad manners.

"I will not bring you here," the Youth said to the photograph. "I will never bring you here. The country is beautiful and over the hills there are entralling sunsets, and the morning winds sing enchanting songs in the oak groves; but the people talk of nothing but four street car tickets for a quarter and the price of oysters or the latest new house which the De Mons have built. They are all slaves of the De Mons who are makers of weapons and who have only done splendid things at the expense of world-wide misery; and these people are like them only in lesser degree. No, my beloved, we will never come here. Never will I work for the De Mons and become like the man downstairs or like his wife or even like the woman in the guest chamber; and never will we have a child like the Boy who sleeps in this room. No, beloved; we will go where we can be like the little gray doves and though we may not be as comfortable as these people yet we shall never become so stupid."

And the Youth pressed his lips to the face of the photograph and replaced the leather folder in his pocket and went downstairs to the breakfast table where the others in the house

were already gathered and were discussing the price of grapefruit.

But the little gray doves called to one another as they had done very early in the morning when first the

golden sunlight commenced to run down the hillsides, because they knew that they were not to be the only happy ones in the world; and they were glad to know it.



The End

By Arthur Carter

HIS death was calm and peaceful. Shortly before he died he summoned her to his bedside, and, stroking her silken hair, spoke to her.

"On some wintry morning," he said, "when King Frost has the world in his grip, when the snow crunches like powder under your foot, and a wintry blast chills you to the marrow"—his voice sank a little—"think of me roasting in Hell."



The Menace

By George B. Jenkins, Jr.

WHEN I exchange confidences,
When I laugh lightly at my old loves,
When I amuse others with the sinister details of my sentimental experiences,
There is *one* entanglement
That is never mentioned.

Yet my mind is not at ease,
Even though five years have passed!
Women, I hear, soon or late tell *everything* to their husbands.



SOCIETY is composed of the stupid, the dull and the rich. The stupid make the conversation, the dull enjoy it, and the rich pay the bills.



ONLY the diamond can cut the diamond. It takes a woman to beat a woman.
And sometimes it takes two women.



Modern Improvements

By Bertram Bloch

I

THE father of Clement Trotter was a narrow-minded, platitudinous man of business. When Clement languidly emerged from the university with two degrees, a genuine Colonial armchair and a bulldog, the elder Trotter immediately insisted that he "get down to business."

Because of his love for his father—and his dependence upon his pocket-book—Clement, with an expressive shrug of his shoulders, complied with the paternal request. He decided to become a lover of beauty. His father, who had studied at the International Correspondence School, did not remember seeing that profession listed on their books. He solicited information.

"By a lover of beauty," quoth his son, from the depths of the armchair (it really was a valuable armchair, having almost come over in the *Mayflower*), "by a lover of beauty, I mean one who makes the pursuit and discovery and dissemination of beauty his life-work. In this world of gross and sordid materialism, there are, alas! too few engaged in that soul-satisfying undertaking."

"Is there money in it?" asked his father, in his practical way.

Clement sighed. What use to seek to impress this man, whom an evil chance had made his parent, with the wonder and romance and æsthetic thrills that came to the pursuer of beauty in lieu of money?

"There will be money in it, incidentally," he said, assuming a hard, practical, money-in-the-bank tone that

tickled his father's ears. "Take this chair for example, the very chair in which I am now sitting. I purchased it for seven dollars. It is worth fifty. There's money in antiques; there's money in discovering a new singer or painter. And, of course, I'll be able to net a fair income from my monographs on various phases of art." He smiled contentedly. "Yes, indeed, I'll be able to dispense with your aid in no time."

He really meant, "at no time," but when one has a practical father it is well not to choose one's words too carefully.

The elder Trotter, impressed by the two degrees, which were facts; by the Colonial chair, which was also a fact, and by the word 'monographs,' which he didn't understand, gave a rather doubtful consent that his son become a lover of beauty.

"Clement's gone into the art business," he told his friends, two-fisted, hard-headed men of affairs to whom he could hardly say, "Clement has become a lover of beauty."

II

WHEN Clement Trotter had been pursuing beauty for two years he chanced one day to eat at the restaurant in which Daisy Mitchell worked.

In that time he had not confined himself exclusively to such inanimate objects as Colonial chairs and monographs. He had, to use a phrase he wouldn't have used, pursued it also on the hoof. He had, in fact, sought it more often at Dionysian revels than in the contemplative solitude of his study. In the words of the troubadours of

Broadway, he was "a bear at picking good-lookers." He came among them seeking beauty, and he found it.

Word of his nocturnal adventures, some of them wild riots of colour—red lips, white shoulders, golden wine, black eyes and blue coats—coming to the ears of his father, that worthy gentleman, denying that any publicity is good publicity, objected.

Not that he objected flatly to the sowing of wild oats. As a practical man he realized that since the world had so decreed it, wild oats had to be sown, but as the same practical man, he disapproved of the employment of pipe and tabor.

"Be a little more quiet about it," he cautioned. "It's not a circus, you know, You don't have to parade down Main Street."

Then as an afterthought he added, "And to keep people from talking, you might pay attention to a respectable girl once in a while."

Thereupon Clement Trotter read his father a homily on the word "respectable." It was his belief that girls were respectable only because they were afraid to be otherwise.

"That's why they go in for such un-beautiful things as suffrage and social work. Respectability is a flying in the face of Nature. It is a perversion of all the gifts of the gods." He shook his finger at his father. "You—you and your kind—destroyed Athens and made Venus cover her face."

"I'm glad she's covered something," said his father.

But Clement said, "Bah!" and returned to his revels.

All of which has no real bearing on the story save to show that when Clement's eye rested twice on a girl it was a great compliment, and that when it rested three times, the girl could die, knowing that life would pay her no greater tribute.

Think, then, what it meant when he sat and stared at Daisy for a full five minutes, his cocktail poised in his hand.

Now, nine out of ten men who came into the restaurant thought Daisy beau-

tiful, indicating that Venus had been a little precipitate in going into retirement. Yes, nine out of ten thought her beautiful, and six of those nine endeavoured to hold her in conversation.

But Daisy was fonder of tips than of compliments, and when the tips were gathered in the conversations ended. For Daisy possessed what Clement called "that damnably destructive Puritan code of morals." Without being able to advance any rational explanations for her conduct, she nevertheless preserved her chastity with great care.

Clement had met this attitude toward life before. Several times girls had timidly suggested that they wouldn't do anything wicked. In the majority of these cases, Clement had convinced the girls that "obeying the dictates of nature" could not possibly be considered—except by a twisted world—as an act of wickedness. In the few other cases, fear of parental discipline or religious scruples defeated him, or rather caused him willingly to give up the attempt. I say willingly, for such excessive and irrational timidity robbed the girl of any claim to beauty. Beauty is a bold, courageous thing, free as the winds of heaven and as untamable. Warped by fear it ceases to be beauty.

But Daisy wasn't afraid of anything. With her cool, gray eyes she looked life in the face, and even though it leered a little, she wasn't afraid. She was fresh and young and vigorous. Not having been brought up in the glorious freedom of a farm, she walked without slouching and didn't suffer from indigestion. She possessed a certain optimism, based on nothing at all save her animal spirits, and a sympathy for most animate things which gave her a lovable naïveté. While she wouldn't have appreciated Cezanne or Debussy or old Chinese tapestries, she did love colour and song and pretty fabrics.

Clement talked to her, and came back another time to continue the conversation, though he objected to the noise and sterile whiteness of the restaurant. And after the second visit there was a

third, and a fourth, and a tenth, and a—quite a good many more.

He was impressed with Daisy and Daisy was impressed with him. He was different from the others. There was nothing sly about him. He wasn't given to winks and insinuations and innuendoes. He didn't run a patent eye over her when she waited on him. There was nothing surreptitious in his manner of lovemaking. Clement sincerely believed that when he induced a girl to become a votary of Venus, he was rescuing her from the brink of hypocritical asceticism; that he was teaching her the joy of living.

Daisy, being more than usually lovingly, must be taught the litany of love. The thought of her going through life an Amaryllis with no one to sport with depressed him.

But even worse was in store for him. He learned one day that Daisy was engaged to a young man endeavouring to break into major league baseball.

His artistic soul revolted. Every cranny of it filled with horror. When he met the man, a raw young giant, with broken finger-nails and a red mop of unkempt, stringy hair, he all but wept. Give this beautiful creature, this morsel for a god, this consummate achievement of nature, over to that buck-toothed barbarian! Such a deed would be on a par with the destruction of the cathedral at Rheims. Better to hang a Botticelli in a kitchen or use a Stradivarius in a jazz band than to feed Daisy to this Minotaur. No, such a thwarting of the will of nature could not be. The dome of the heavens would crack and crush the earth. . . . She must be saved. She must be saved, even if he would have to marry her himself. . . .

What was he thinking of? He laughed the thought away. He was losing his greatest pride, his sense of values. But still she must be saved. . . .

He poured his views of life and beauty, a glittering mass, into her lap. She looked at them. She did not reject them because she was engaged or because she feared her parents or be-

cause she dreaded eternal damnation. But she rejected them all the same. Naïvely she spoke of something which she called "true love," something which she felt that the young, fresh, broken-nailed ball-player would give her. And in return she would love him and make him a true wife.

Clement groaned. A true wife! He could see her in the rôle. She who was formed to reign diademed over the festivals of the gods would lean, heated and disheveled, over a stove, dirty children clinging to her dirty dress. What irony! Again the thought of marrying her came to him. He sneered it away.

But it persisted. All over the world beautiful maidens were being sacrificed for want of a Theseus. But here was a Theseus. . . . Marry some day, he supposed he would. Convention, tradition and the weight of his father's will would bring that about. . . . And since he would marry, why not . . . ? He put away the thought, but it hung round the corner of his mind, where his eye would see it whenever he turned.

In the end he proposed marriage to her. King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid.

But Daisy, knowing life far better than she knew fairy stories, did not believe him. Her eyes became troubled. Daisy, saturated with the skepticism of the city, spoke to him sorrowfully.

"I was afraid you'd try somethin' like this. I've been scared of it down in me heart all the time."

"But I mean it, Diana." He called her Diana because her whiteness and her chastity put him in mind of the moon-goddess. "I love you, you magnificent creature."

"You're not kidding me?"

"Have I ever lied to you?"

"N-no."

Then he burst into a rhapsody of love. And in the end he convinced her that she was the most beautiful woman on earth, and as such deserved the spoils of earth, which her awkward young first baseman could certainly not give her.

Daisy was convinced. Her eyes, filled with pleasure at the pictures he drew. . . . But Daisy had a peculiar sense of honour. She had pledged her word to her broken-nailed lover, and she refused to be false to it. Even Clement's denunciation of her as a Victorian failed to move her. But then it is just possible that she didn't know what a Victorian was.

Clement stormed and Clement raged. He had reached out his hand from Olympus, and she had refused it. What sentimental folly! His pearl forebore to exchange her dirty shell for his jewelled setting because, forsooth, she had made a promise to a—clam.

But Daisy remained firm. She was sad, she was heavy-hearted, but she was adamant. She went on with her prosaic life, thinking as seldom as possible of the splendour and the riches she was giving up. Once and once only, she gave sign to her mop-haired lover that all was not right. At the movies one evening, when the silken-garbed heroine, raising such eyebrows as never bloomed on land or sea, welcomed the "guests" into the rococo ballroom of her house, Daisy wept. But she refused to offer any explanation, and her lover put it down to the unfathomable vagaries of her sex.

But even the Sphinx could not forever keep her secret. Before long George, the ball-player, learned of her sacrifice. With rare finesse he extracted the truth from her. The next day his manager told him that he was to be shipped back to the "bushes" for further seasoning. In this hour of darkness he found time to think of Daisy. Without realizing that he was doing anything heroic, he wrote her a letter, breaking the engagement, and slipped out of town before she could answer it.

Daisy shed tears over the letter, and even Clement was impressed until he remembered that self-sacrifice was sentimentality, and that sentimentality had gone out with the last century. Then he decided that the lanky first-baseman was giving up Daisy because he intend-

ed finding a girl out West, and so save railroad fare. But he didn't express this opinion to Daisy. He was wise enough not to.

III

WITH the passing of George a great obstacle was removed, only to bring into view another, equally obstructive and fraught with far graver danger to Clement, himself.

Across his horizon there now blazed the phrase, "What will people say?" and more particularly, "What will the governor say?"

It really was a rhetorical question, this last. He knew well enough what the governor would say. The governor's bump of love for the beautiful was not highly developed, whereas his bump of reverence for social position was considerably more than a hillock, while his money bump was a veritable mountain. He knew that were he to go to his father and say, "Father, I am going to marry Diana," his father would reach for Bradstreet with one hand and for the Social Register with the other. On finding that Diana's rating was zero-zero in one and less than that in the other, his father would exclaim: ". . ."

Clement shuddered at the mental picture of his father, wrathful and denunciatory. It would be necessary to be subtle.

Dispassionately he probed the situation.

On the money side there was nothing to do. Daisy was poor, with no rich relatives tottering towards an early grave, nor with any other kind of rich relatives.

On the social side, the aspect was no more promising. A sergeant of police was the hetman of Daisy's family; and he was only a cousin several times removed.

No, the attack would have to be made with other weapons. What weapons? Daisy's beauty, Daisy's honesty and courage and sympathy.

Were these the weapons with which

to enter the ring against his father? He feared not. Like lances of glass they would shiver and break before the onslaught of the parental battle-ax.

And yet there were no others. He thought. In his hands, adroitly managed, as only he could manage them, they might be made to do. Beauty was unquestionably an asset. Simplicity—well, it behooved him to make of her simplicity a shining weapon. . . . These must be made to win his mother and his sisters, and, through them, his father.

But though Daisy was beautiful and simple, and though she possessed a certain natural ease and innate rhythm, her acquired movements left something to be desired. Her arms occasionally rested on her hips, while one shoulder swung higher than the other. She sat slouchily, and she chewed gum.

Would these faults outweigh her virtues in the eyes of his people? The answer was easy. They would. Virtues are pallid things. They serve chiefly to fill holes that would otherwise harbour faults. Goodness may bring happiness of the interior kind, but it doesn't bring rings to the doorbell. Daisy might be courageous and honest and sweet, but her laugh was a bit vacant and she did tilt her soup-plate the wrong way.

But only time could bring about a metamorphosis in Daisy. To a lover as ardent as Clement was just then, Time is anything but a kindly old man, and even if he had been willing to wait he didn't see how he was to change Daisy. That needed contact with people who mattered, but to get that contact Daisy would have to be changed. A vicious circle, as the saying is.

Clement despaired through seventeen cigarettes, then a bright light burst upon him.

He rose and admired himself in his mirror, standing with his long, artistic fingers twined behind his head. The Devil take it, but he was clever. No gainsaying that. Then to show the mir-

ror how easy it all had been, he yawned and lit another cigarette.

Then he sat down and looked steadily at the great light. Its remarkable brilliancy consisted of the idea of converting Daisy's liabilities into assets. If Daisy was crude and unlettered and even a little tough—why the thing to do was to give her crudeness and her illiteracy and her toughness a less vulgar and more attractive name, and parade it before the world with pomp and ceremony.

Crude, illiterate, tough? Not at all. Daisy was primitive. And what did that mean? Simply that she was a child of the pungent earth, free of the hothouse, decaying veneer of our false, unnatural civilization. A queer mixture of adjectives, but expressive. She was cousin to the winds of Heaven, and the seven seas were her— Her relationship to the seven seas escaped him at the moment, but it would come, when needed.

It did come. And a lot more with it. He found that he had touched a subject which opened up a veritable treasure-house of luscious phrases: The civilization, so-called, of the past thousand years had brought the world to the crumbling brink of black chaos. Man was a perversion of himself. In the wilderness of life, he no longer prayed for manna but for manner. He envied the fleet gazelle but wore shoes. He envied the strength of the lion but lived by the chafing-dish. He had lost the touch of nature which makes the world kin. The blind and speechless army ant works in partnership with his fellow termites with marvelous precision, but all the words taken from a dictionary two feet thick no longer bind two men together. At their festivals the old Norsemen leaped six feet in full armor; today, when he dances, man doesn't even lift his feet from the ground.

The material was endless. It had need to be. Clement flung it with a lavish hand. He sowed it where he walked—and talked. It took root. It grew. It burgeoned. . . .

IV

HE took his theory with him when his family migrated to a northern beach. It bore the transplanting well. It became "the thing" that summer.

"We must return to the primitive or we decay," was heard more often even than "I bid a no-trump."

In an effort to return to the primitive, bathing-suits were made shorter and clingier. Simple, naïve little wriggles were introduced into the dancing; charming little gestures, which our ancestors used before the invention of words, were introduced somewhat later. At the same time the stock of good-looking life-guards and chauffeurs rose above par, and only the timely discovery that "society men" could be more primitive even than the proletariest of the proletariat saved many families from losing faithful servants and their daughters at the same time.

And then, with brass, strings, woodwind and chorus going great guns, Diana, née Daisy, was thrust upon the stage.

The entrance was well-timed. With one accord the audience applauded. No, there was an exception. Trotter, the elder, reached for his Bradstreet and his Social Register, as Clement knew he would, and not finding Daisy in either he yawned.

But even his rocky nature could not withstand the flood of disapproval that swept over him.

"If she had money and family she would not be primitive, would she?" the wild waves cried, and before long he was forced to beat his sword into a walking-stick and join the procession.

Clement had won. The world—his world—lay prostrate before Daisy's feet, begging to be walked on.

Daisy was bewildered, stunned, overjoyed. At first. After a time the bewilderment passed. Also the stunned feeling. And towards the end of the season, when the whirl of fêtes and dances and teas and scandals was less breath-taking, something of the joy went, too.

Daisy began to perceive that she was being accepted as something queer, something exotic, and she didn't like it.

Clement became conscious of the same thing. He rather liked it, but he soon saw that the cult of the primitive, though it might last a little longer, was fated to go the way of all cults, and that when it had gone Daisy would be found outside the sacred circle.

Again he smoked endless cigarettes. Again a great white light came. He must have her educated against the time when the primitive would pass into the purple shades of oblivion.

Daisy, who was heartily sick of being primitive, was only too eager to be taught the habits, customs and social instincts of her new neighbors, together with such slight knowledge of the things in books which were considered indispensable.

She had, of course, picked up a good bit of the etiquette of Clement's tribe that summer. Having a keen mind and the desire to learn the rest would be easy.

She was turned over for a space of months to a friend of Clement's, a young assistant professor, so impractical as to have burdened himself with a wife and a baby. The assistant professor, for a consideration, was willing further to burden himself with Daisy.

She proved an apt pupil. In a short time she found that her mind would retain all sorts of useless facts.

As her period of study drew to its close, the assistant professor began to suggest continuation work, so pleased was he with the work of his hands. He was contemplating writing a thesis on his method of teaching and regretted bitterly that he hadn't any method.

He spoke of himself feelingly as Pygmalion, and when his wife became sarcastic wondered in his heart whether he ought not end his dry, drab existence as a hawker of knowledge and run off to some far country with this wonderful product of his art. Together on a green hill they would dwell in joyous solitude. There he would have

time to write the books that would never be born in the sharp and grinding life of the schoolroom. With this wonderful creature to minister to his wants, thoughts would come on the wings of his wishing. . . .

For years afterwards, whenever his respectable, conventional life seemed more than usually dull, he bitterly lashed himself for not having boldly and wickedly eloped with Daisy. . . . It never occurred to him that Daisy might not have been willing to elope with him.

V

THE renovated Diana went back to Clement's family. Shorn of her gaucheries, she was welcomed with a new welcome.

Clement sighed contentedly. When the curtain would descend on the primitive for the last time, Daisy would still retain her seat in the family circle. And with new zest, he exploited his discovery, determined to squeeze out of it every drop of applause before the orchestra played the cue for the next "act."

And when the interest began to slacken in his mother's set he took his new philosophy to his old haunts among the lights. Of course he couldn't introduce Daisy, who was soon to take a place in his family, to these Bacchantes. So he turned her over to his sisters and pleaded the excuse of a new art venture.

But Broadway whispers are heard easily on Fifth Avenue. Daisy soon knew where he was going in pursuit of his art. She was displeased—displeased at being left alone with his people, whom she began to find tiresome; displeased that he had not yet ceased to harp on his one string.

Along with this displeasure came thoughts. Among these thoughts one stood out. If she was truly saving him from decay, as he claimed, why didn't he praise her and refrain from praising himself? If she was so much superior to him and his kind why did he strive

so earnestly to make her fit their moulds?

She thought a lot about this, when she had time. One man she asked for the answer. Morgan Tiverton, a blond young man with a long neck and a small head, had been one of the first to sit at her feet and ask to be saved from decay. Now, when she questioned him, he winked under his monocle, and courted her. He made love to her, but didn't answer her. She chided him. He told her that in the primitive state it was perfectly all right for one man to steal another's bride—and she was only a bride-to-be. She knew that the primitive state didn't have anything to do with this, but she pardoned him and let him go on. Others had made love to her before, but she had stopped them. It may be that she was getting tired of warding them off.

So Morgan Tiverton whispered love pleas in her ear on those occasions when Clement was away.

Then one evening as he was taking her home he kissed her. She let him.

A few days later he took her driving far out into the country. He had something to say to her. He said it. Almost weeping, he told her that his family's finances were low. He was to be the sacrificial lamb to save his father from ruin. The night before he had become engaged to a wholesale grocer's daughter. He didn't love her. He loved Daisy. But what could he do? Daisy admitted that he couldn't do anything. He vowed he would continue to love her. He kissed her. She let him. He would continue to kiss her, he said, until his marriage, and when he returned from his honeymoon he would take up the kissing again.

A few weeks later another man kissed her. This man was very good-looking. Also he was married. His wife almost caught them. They were thrilled at the narrowness of the escape. Daisy laughed all the way home. She was still smiling when Clement kissed her good night.

Then, as she was disrobing, she sud-

denly stopped smiling. She looked down at her dress, the daring cut of which had won her many admiring glances—and some others. She sat on the edge of her bed.

She went out walking alone that afternoon. She met Morgan Tiverton idling before a bulletin-board. She asked him to take her to some quiet tea-room. She said she wanted to speak to him seriously. He wouldn't go.

"Last game of the series," he said. "Got five hundred up on it."

She went alone, and sat a long time.

The next evening she went to her room to dress immediately after dinner. Clement was to take her to a dance. Morgan Tiverton was to be

there. Also the good-looking man with a wife.

At ten o'clock, Clement went to her room. It was empty. Just as in a melodrama, there was a note leaning against the mirror on her dressing-table. It was addressed to him. He opened it.

He read:

Dear Clement:

You are right. Only the primitive can save us. I feel that very keenly. I am decaying. To the primitive I therefore turn. I married George this morning. With the money he made in the world series, we will honeymoon in California. I am sorry. But perhaps you will find someone to take my place. If not, I suggest that you and Morgan Tiverton decay together.

Daisy.



Morning

By Muna Lee

THAT tree of swaying foliage and slender stem
Detached itself from the huddled mass of trees.
There was a flutter of awakened birds,
There was a sudden freshness on the breeze.

Day came so quietly—darkness merely passed;
Light merely spread and overreached the gray,
Unheralded by harsh colour, calm and pure—
And we were glad that dawn had come that way.



YOU wondered when it would be safe to begin kissing your first sweetheart,
and you wonder when it will be safe to stop kissing your last.



WHEN a man falls violently in love, it means that some sensible girl is looking
for a home.



EVERY woman has some vice. Some giggle, some freckle and some get fat.

The Older Woman

By Miffin Crane

SHE went to the telephone and recognized the voice of little Marie. "Are you busy, Mrs. Moffat?" the girl asked. "But let me come up for a second anyway! I've got such *exciting* news to tell you!"

The older woman frowned a little; her shoulders sagged in a melancholy droop. She was in a mood of despondency, disinclined to speak to anybody. But Marie was a touching young thing, showing her a charming, inexplicable affection. She hesitated only a second before she answered.

"Of course, dear," she said. "Come right up. I'm alone this evening."

She returned the instrument to its hook, took a step toward the chair abandoned at the summons of the telephone, and then, changing her mind, waited near the door. A moment later she heard the metallic click of the elevator, rapid steps in the outer corridor, and Marie was at the door.

They embraced; the young girl kissed her warmly. In that initial instant the older woman saw that some emotional thing had happened. The girl's eyes were wide and bright, the pupils dilated, as if with fever. Her cheeks were coloured with a fluctuant flush. Her breath seemed to tremble with each expiring impulse, as if in ecstatic vibration with her tremulously secret thoughts. Mrs. Moffat took her hands; she drew her gently toward the divan.

"Tell me about it, dear?" she said.

Before she spoke the young girl kissed the older woman with grateful affection.

"It happened just as you said it would," she began. "This afternoon

he came. I pretended that I didn't want to talk to him, I pretended to be bored. He tried to kiss me—I turned away from him. Then he told me that he wanted me—that I was the only girl in the world for him! . . ."

Her excited little voice continued; the older woman was scarcely listening now. But the same smile curved her lips, fixed mechanically.

A cheap little ruse had sufficed for Marie's success. An old trick—leading the young fellow to believe that she was indifferent. Two weeks ago the child had come to her in despair—and received the counsel that had served her so fortunately. Mrs. Moffat suppressed a sigh.

She knew these intriguing dodges, these matters of cleverness and technique. Two decades of experience had taught her them—and now they were useless. A sense of self-contempt came into her thoughts like the sudden taste of a bitter drug. She had become one who knew all the rules to teach, but was herself powerless to accomplish.

Now she raised her eyes and her glance passed over the eager girl who spoke to her. Marie was lovely. Her brown hair crowned her with tender curves; the pink tips of her ears were like little jewels, half concealed. Her mouth was gracious with expectant smiles; her eyes were lighted with eagerness. To the older woman each detail of her charm was a reproach, reminding her of her own passed loveliness.

The smile on her lips grew harsher; her eyes narrowed with a cold emotion. A feeling scarcely separable from hate assailed her senses as the girl's persis-

tent youth was imaged in her eyes. For a moment it seemed that she was being plagued, by a sardonic enemy in the fates, with this vision of perfection, so that she might comprehend more entirely the bitterness of her personal loss.

And then, as if her gaze had at last penetrated some falsifying film, she saw the little, almost premonitory lines about her young friend's eyes; tiny, half defined wrinkles, now no more than suggested shadows: time would make these deep! She observed the wraith of a pallor that rested on the girl's full lips: already their fading was announced. All the small defects, the brief, immaterial touches of time were recorded then in her keen scrutiny.

It was at this moment that Mrs. Moffat experienced her prophetic vision. In a single instant of time a dozen years passed over the young face before her; the lips had hardened, the eyes were marked by fan-like radiations, their eager light had faded into the dull glow of disillusion, the smooth cheeks had lost the supple flow of their curves, the voice its charm of uttering dreaming words.

The older woman smiled sincerely, now, a smile of sincere pleasure. The oppressive consciousness of her own defeat was assuaged by the knowledge of this other woman's unescapable fate.

An emotion of almost passionate delight stirred her. None could escape! Marie must sooner or later grow old too, and in the transition suffer as she suffered.

She put out her hand; she touched the young girl's arm.

"And you're going to be very happy?" she asked.

The girl smiled, assured, confident, dreaming. She made no reply; the assurance of her expectant eyes was an adequate answer.

And witnessing this pathetic confidence, the older woman's emotions softened. She no longer knew the thrill of a personal vindication, an intimate pleasure, in her secret knowledge of those unhappy circumstances life would bring to her young friend. Instead, her heart was touched with pity, with a feeling of oneness, of vague solidarity, of scarcely defined sympathy, with a feeling that she and this young girl shared a communion of fate.

Time was their mutual assailant; they were comrades-in-arms in the same ineffectual and ever-lost battle.

The knowledge that she was not alone tempered her secret melancholy; she stood up, and circling little Marie with her arms, she kissed her warm cheek tenderly.

The young girl said nothing. She scarcely felt the embrace. She sat as before, silently, in dreams.



WHEN a woman keeps her eyes open to watch the man during a kiss, she loses her amateur standing.



EVERY bachelor thinks he would like a harem, but your married man knows better.



On Whom the Ladies Dote

By Gertrude Brooke Hamilton

I

THE curate of Gethsemane clicked on the pulpit-light.

He stood with closed eyes and illuminated features—while throughout the church voices of angelic timbre and range, led by the vested choir, sang the last stanza of the hymn preceding the sermon. With a smile diffusing magnetism, the curate—Boyce Tithering—opened his eyes, and gave out his text in the melodious cadence that drew to the metropolitan church goodly numbers of women.

It was not the morning service when the rector preached to gentlemen of the vestry punctiliously attentive and gentlemen obviously solving the intricacies of Wall Street. No, this was the curate's own service, the afternoon evensong—attended largely by the sex reputed coy and hard to please yet sustaining a just reputation for gentleness and loyalty.

The curate was very fond of evensong. In his sermons there was no taint of money-talk, for they were attuned to ears neither punctilious nor preoccupied, tender little ears of pearly flesh and sensitive contour, ears a-cock for deftly intoned subtleties.

Tithering was apt to select his text from passages concerning some biblical heroine, who, if delicately expounded, carried an effective moral weight from the very attributes of her mellowed immorality—queens who by their treacherous charms undid their kings, concubines whose amours were destructive, contributed, in the most harmonious fashion possible, to his half-hour sermons extolling the admirable example of the woman whose price was above rubies.

The curate, beginning his sermon, invariably took stock of the feminine faces upturned to him from the auditorium. Today, he discerned quite a sprinkling of Gethsemane devotees, leading spirits of the guilds, bazaars and general bally-hoos. The ladies, bless 'em!

There was Miss Rosalie Dewar adorning a front pew with her forget-me-not bonnet, who had not missed a service for forty years and who had given her diamonds to purchase a communion cup for the former rector—it was said that when the divine passed on to realms celestial his wife had allowed Miss Rosalie to spend a half hour alone with the corpse! There was Mrs. Tarrant Leeds in a side pew with her little daughter Mildred, Mrs. Leeds did a good deal of the entertaining best graced by a clerical presence. There was Miss Stoneleigh in a right-aisle pew, who attended to the altar-cloths and choir surplices.

Well toward the front Mrs. Larry Lowder maintained her favourite posture, gloved hands drooping over a cornice of the pew, eyes and chin devoutly raised, Mrs. Larry was the victim of a non-churchgoing husband whose evensongs were sung in convivial surroundings. There was Mrs. Curdy, who, presiding over the parish house where the curate lived, was an object of envy to the virgins of the parish. In an opposite pew was Mrs. Poncefoote Gurley, wife of a retired naval captain, and Miss Lucy, her husband's niece—a plump girl with a fat fortune inherited from her deceased parents. The other occupant of the Gurley pew was a stranger to Gethsemane, though not entirely a stranger to the curate—a bewitching young wid-

ow named Anna Quinn, who was wintering with the Gurleys.

Her presence in the Gurley pew quite flustered Tithering.

The curate had met the widow at a tea. He had chided her for not attending his evensongs; her retort, with its lack of interest and fleck of insolence, had showed him that Anna Quinn was at that point in a woman's existence when the bloom of first youth, having toned down to a richer ripeness the intuitive mind, awakes and darts hither and thither like a dragon-fly in search of light.

In her manner toward him he had observed a mockery that piqued him while it allured him. Involuntarily, his attitude had assumed the defensive, and he had matched her quizzing tongue with a warmth calculated to subject even so insolent and delightful a creature. Her appearance among his fair worshipers gave him an agreeable thrill of anticipation.

For the widow was not the ordinary religious devotee. She was beautiful, worldly, acutely discerning—in the sea of upturned faces, her face stood out by reason of its indifference and its suggestion of brilliant reasoning powers. More than once, during his discourse, the curate found his tongue tripping and his heart beating at undue speed. He was glad when his sermon ended, and the service flowed on to the recessional hymn and the exit into the vestry-room of chorister and clerical.

While reciting the after-words of prayer that effectively terminated the evensong, the Reverend Boyce Tithering hurriedly divested himself of surplice and book.

It was the custom in Gethsemane, as in many churches, for the officiating clergyman—in a becoming black robe buttoned from throat to ankle and heavily corded about the waist—to stand at the foot of the edifice and greet the parishioners as they passed out. Today, the curate hurried down to the main doors.

With an eye on the aisle by which the widow and the Gurleys would leave

the church, he had a handshake and a word for a string of femininities: "Why, how-do-you-do, Miss Rosalie?—I see you're wearing your heart-stirring bonnet." And "Good-afternoon, Mrs. Lowder—tell that delinquent husband I'm coming after him! And Mrs. Leeds and tiny Mildred, just like a doll in her new coat!" For other fair ones: "Delighted to see you! So glad you enjoyed the sermon! Come back for another evensong!"

Mrs. Gurley and Lucy stopped to speak to him—Anna Quinn was a pace behind, smart in a dark tailleur and crêpe casquette.

The curate held out his right hand to Mrs. Gurley and his left to Lucy.

"I've not forgotten my promise to sup with you this evening," he told the aunt and niece.

Mrs. Gurley pressed his hand.

"We're in our car," she said; "may we wait for you?"

The billowy Lucy echoed her aunt's words,

"May we wait for you?"

"You surely may." Tithering smiled at Lucy. "I'll be out in a jiffy. I have to speak to all these people, you know."

A tactful movement sent the Gurleys on toward the doors—and he was facing Anna Quinn.

He held out his hand to her.

"I saw you from the pulpit," he told her, with a boyishness that seldom failed of its mark.

"Did you?" Her voice had something of a drawl.

Tithering felt his colour rise.

"What happy thought moved you to come?" he murmured, retaining a hand which vibrated the most delicate volts of animation.

"Curiosity brought me," confessed the young widow, with a smiling glint in eyes the colour of mahogany.

He found himself staring at her mobile mouth, over-red, if one thought in the same second of Lucy Gurley's modest lips.

"Curiosity denotes interest," he laughed; "I feel flattered."

Her complexion, unlike Lucy's, was

not innocent of powder though of an undoubtedly fine texture and clarity, the lines of her shoulders were superbly slim, the hollow of her throat was white as the inner lining of an eggshell. His colour rose higher.

Her words were tinged with humour:

"I wanted to see Lucy's curate on his hunting-ground, so I came."

His colour betrayed a twinge of affrontment rather than increased pleasure. Lucy's curate!—as if the ravings of that foolish damsel were all he stood on!—and the term "his hunting-ground" intimated that this mahogany-eyed wordling thought him some sort of goose-chaser, bird-snarer, if not poacher.

He turned from Anna Quinn, with the conventional, "So good of you; come again." In some effusiveness, he greeted a plain little thing in a storm coat of dingy tweed.

Yet his eyes strayed after the widow, noted her spirited, graceful tread, the slopes of her slender figure and the laconic poise of her head. He was to sup with the Gurleys that evening, and he made up his mind to appear at his buoyant best—to work for the light of admiration in Anna Quinn's beautiful and quizzical brown eyes.

He took a side aisle to the vestry-room, glanced into a mirror there and found his visage comforting. The curate was considered very good-looking in a blond, lad-like way. He changed from his robe to his coat, gave his blond halo an extra brushing, took up his gloves and hat. A zesty step carried him out through a side door, to which Mrs. Gurley had brought her limousine, and from which the choir-boys were issuing.

Lucy and her aunt sat together in the car; there was a vacant place beside Anna Quinn. With an engaging gaiety of manner, Tithering pinched a chorister's cheeks, calling out,

"Did you ever see such dimples as these, Miss Lucy?"

Mrs. Gurley spoke, pleasantly. "Bring the little boy along to tea, Mr. Tithering."

"Bring him along," sighed Lucy, palpitant.

The curate took the hand of the dimpled chorister, and—hoping that the picture of blond divine and small-boy cherub found favor in certain brown eyes—brought him along. With an agility which sat well on a figure that might some day evince a rector's paunch, Tithering took the empty seat beside Anna Quinn and placed the dimpled urchin on his knee.

He ran his fingers through the boy's hair.

"Let me introduce Master Dimples—in weekday life, Freddie," he said blithely, to the three ladies.

His chatter was genial. "D'you know our Freddie is in line for a solo in the Te Deum some Sunday?—haven't you noticed how his voice soars above the others?—you must come to hear Freddie when he sings, 'To Thee cherubim and seraphim continually do cry'."

He smiled at Anna Quinn; and, again, felt that tell-tale colour rise in his face.

She had not caught his smile, because she was not looking at him—she was watching nothing in particular, listening to no one, with her clear-cut profile turned away.

He checked a tendency to look a trifle longer at the rare modeling of her nose and chin. And, throughout the rest of the drive, he entertained the Gurleys with bits of parish gossip, weddings and social activities.

II

At supper in the comfortable Gurley residence, situated in a block of old Lexington Avenue not yet molested by the house-wreckers, the curate did justice to the excellent food.

Afterwards, he invited the chorister to a shadow-picture combat in the drawing-room; could Freddie make shadow wolves and camels with the simple aid of a pocket handkerchief and a cleverly adjusted light? The curate could. He

had up his black cloth sleeve all sorts of drawing-room tricks.

For the delectation of Lucy and Mrs. Gurley—and he hoped the delectation of the widow—he treated a galaxy of shadow-animals against a lighted space of the drawing-room wall; with a few deft turns of his handkerchief, a knot, a crease, a flap, he convulsed Lucy with loping camels, creeping wolves, running foxes, winging doves and crawling serpents.

Then they settled around a crackling wood fire. Lucy brought out a box of the captain's cigars, lighting Tithering's weed with plump, ecstatic fingers. The curate chatted of his work among the poor, the hospitals which he visited once a week with altar flowers. Mildred Leeds' left-over toys which he distributed among East-side children, the sweaters Mrs. Larry Lowder had knitted for East-side mothers and how the mothers had found the necks too small and given him small thanks for the charity.

"The sweaters *did* have turkey necks," he smiled, smoking the captain's cigar.

Mrs. Gurley bent forward and patted his knee.

"You funny good boy!" she exclaimed, amused.

"So good!" slipped from Lucy's lips, with a fervour expressing a belief in his goodness that nothing short of an explosion could disrupt.

The curate found himself glancing at Anna Quinn.

She sat with her fingers locked about her knees and her eyes on the fire—there was an unmistakable quirk to her red mouth and her nostrils were ever so slightly distended by a breath that might have been one of scorn.

He perceived, with an unwarranted flutter of his nerves, that the young widow was making light of him in her thoughts. Her alert, well-balanced mind was, perhaps, weighing him and finding him wanting. She was inwardly smiling at Lucy and Mrs. Gurley—and at him.

He was conscious of a slow, stirring

anger against Anna Quinn for daring to study and dismiss him with nothing more than a quirk of her attractive mouth. The curate wished that he might find some suitable way of giving her a good dressing-down before the Gurleys.

But, as no well-bred badinage occurred to him, he glanced at a mantel clock, and turned to Freddie.

"It's about time you were tripping to bed, Dimples," he said, rising. "Make your bow to the ladies, and thank your hostess for a delightful evening."

Tithering shook hands with Mrs. Gurley and Lucy—and with Anna Quinn.

"Shall I see you again at my evening-song?" he asked her, conscious of her vibrant hand.

Anna Quinn laughed—not replying.

He laughed, too; uncomfortably.

"You're an unbeliever, I fear," he flung at her.

She shrugged—letting his supposition stand.

"I shan't demean myself by asking you to come again," he warned her, with an assumed frivolity. "You should make the acquaintance of Mrs. Lowder's delinquent husband; if such an indiscreet remark is permissible on my tongue!"

He found it difficult to maintain his levity—she was so coolly offensive, so indifferent.

His adieux to Lucy and Mrs. Gurley were cordial, and he made an exit from the residence towing the chorister by the shoulder. At the corner, he bade the small boy run along home, wherever he lived. Then Tithering crossed to the quiet stretches of Madison Avenue and went up them at a gait that leaned toward self-communing.

His thoughts revolved around Anna Quinn. This was the first time he had spent an evening in her company, and he was finding the reaction aggravating—yet decidedly agreeable. This aloof young widow piqued him. She pleased him. She annoyed him. He had met her only once during the

course of the winter, but he had known something of her through Lucy Gurley and he had known her deceased husband by repute. Roger Quinn had been a newspaper man, a brilliant, fearless fellow, who, in his fancy for denuding the hypocrisies of humanity, had gone to any lengths to uncover fraud; Quinn had died at the height of his career and the editorials had credited him with not having lived in vain. In his widow there were traces of Roger Quinn.

The Reverend Boyce Tithering's tread quickened. She was brilliant and abominable, and a beautiful woman. Beside her, Lucy Gurley was like the sickly center of a toasted marshmallow!

His step slowed—yet Lucy was not to be despised; she had plenty of money in her own right and she was admirably adapted to a rectory.

For some time, the curate had considered marriage with Lucy Gurley a probability. Tonight, after an evening spent with Anna Quinn he felt that he must more speedily arrive at a decision in regard to Lucy; he carefully covered every inch of Lucy's fortune, sounded the shallow rivulet that was Lucy, herself; and, sighing, made up his mind to wed her. He would not speak at once, but that did not matter, because when he did speak Lucy would come babbling to him, more than likely in rapturous tears.

Having disposed of Lucy in his thoughts, he turned his mind back to Anna Quinn. Possibly, her visit to the Gurleys would terminate with the winter season. This supposition did not entirely please him, for she would go away lightly scornful of him. She would forget him. And he would not forget her. Her eyes, her mouth, her chin—her face—would at times haunt him. As a woman indifferent to him, she would remain a thorn in his consciousness. How was this to be averted?

The solution was simple, and enticing. He would apply himself, assiduously, to her subjugation. He would charm this obstreperous widow of a

muck-raker to such an extent that even though she left the Gurleys she would become a permanent member of Gethsemane, a leader of his feminine worshippers! He would marry Lucy. This, with a grimace. But marriage with Lucy need not exclude—

He felt the colour rise in his face. He touched his lips with his tongue.

In his cogitations, he pictured Anna Quinn's face with lifted eyes and chin, humbled, adoring. What a face to subjugate! How humid those glinting eyes might become! How adorable that mouth, in prayer! Those hands palm to palm, those fingers meekly interlacing! That animate voice leading in the song-service!

Mind running nimbly to the future, the amorous curate even beheld the young widow in the place of Miss Rosalie Dewar, who had given her diamonds for a communion cup and who had been allowed by the wife of a defunct rector to spend a half hour with the corpse. He visualized Lucy granting Anna this privilege—Anna, with streaming eyes and yearning hands, bending over his coffin! He doubted if she had diamonds. But there would be a cup from which they might both drink! A communion—!

Boyce Tithering's mood became effulgent. His tread light. Reaching the parish house around the corner from the Church of Gethsemane, he let himself in, softly humming, "To Thee, cherubim and seraphim continually do cry."

III

THE curate found it difficult to carry out the subjugation of the widow, for the simple reason that Anna Quinn attended no more of his services, and when he called at the Gurley home she was either out or in another part of the house.

Tithering began to fear that Anna might leave without conversing with him any more. This apprehension led him to send word to her, through Lucy, that he hoped to see her again

at his evensong. When she ignored this message, he worried over it; wishing he had remained silent. If she went away with this impression of him, supplicating her presence among the ladies of his congregation, he would most assuredly not be able to forget her! The curate began to lose his sleep at night, to betray little outbursts of temper, to find the guild meetings, bazaars and general ballyhoos irksome.

He commenced to take his afternoon walks in the vicinity of old Lexington Avenue.

This last manoeuvre proved lucky, for one evening about five o'clock he saw Anna Quinn on a by-street.

He made a detour that brought them face to face. Baring his sleek blond head, "Why how-do-you-do, Mrs. Quinn?" he exclaimed. "I fancied you had left town long ago—didn't I hear someone say that you'd gone abroad?"

He stripped his right hand of black silk glove, to touch her fingers.

In touching them he realized, anew, their electricity, their vibrations! A sense of pleasurable excitement set his veins tingling. He noted how the cold had touched up her cheeks. Her eyes were even browner than he remembered them. Her smile more challenging.

She appeared to in no way share his emotions.

"Forgive me if I hurry on," she said. "I've a tea engagement."

He detained her, with bared, outflung hand.

"You're hard to see, harder to hold, Mrs. Quinn. Just a minute—tell me, please, why you came only once to my evensong. And why did you ignore the message I sent you? Didn't you like the one sermon you deigned to listen to? Or"—reproachfully—"didn't you like me?"

The shade of reproach in his voice became more noticeable, as he found himself saying, half nervously,

"Whenever I call on Miss Lucy and her aunt, you are nowhere about. Tell the truth. You do not like either my sermons, or me."

Her impersonal words might be interpreted as a dismissal: "The truth is such a raw thing to uncover in this raw weather."

Tithering lingered. It was seldom his province to detain one of her sex, indeed he could not remember having before been the one to prolong an interview.

He flushed, saying, impulsively,

"Make me a promise. Come to my evensong next Sunday. I've a sermon in preparation that I want you to hear."

His tongue tripped, and he steadied it, adding—in some sincerity: "It's a pleasure to preach to a woman of intellect. Won't you come?"

He waited eagerly for her answer; head and right hand still uncovered, lending him a youthful appeal, an appearance of impetuous wistfulness.

Anna Quinn gave him a look that was cognizant of his touch of earnestness and tinge of embarrassment. For a second, her eyes searched his.

"Yes," she said, unexpectedly; "I'll come."

"Thank you!" He allowed her to pass.

The curate walked on, jubilant. He had scored! His elated senses told him, emphatically, that when he employed just the right note of eagerness and seriousness she proved herself not invulnerable by giving him an arrested look, and acceding to his request!

He drew on his glove, smiling. . . . In time, these arrested looks of hers would become more frequent—he did not doubt that the late rector had had quite a tussle with Miss Rosalie Dewar before he reduced her to the state of relinquishing her diamonds and making love to his corpse! It was going to be a tussle. But he was going to win. In time—What would he not give for one long, sweet, arrested look from her? How enthralling each small triumph and defeat, in the uncertain route that led toward the consummation of such a tussle. Each meeting must be marked by some progress toward intimacy. Each evensong she at-

tended must be calculated to magnetize her into returning.

Plans for a perfect service began to formulate in the curate's mind, hymns that harmonized with the lessons and a text that suited the hymns. Running over the heroines of scriptural pages, he selected the Magdalen, she of the flowing hair, penitent hands and streaming eyes. To that listening, vivid face in the Gurley pew he would pour forth dramatic phrases, richly couched similes, the most poignantly passionate example that the world had ever known. He hoped that the weather would be clement. He hoped that Anna had been sincere in her promise. All sorts of hopes ran riot in his thoughts, causing an emotional insurrection there. Truly, his equilibrium was disturbed, his *amour propre* was out of gear.

IV

SUNDAY dawned bleak, and toward afternoon a wet snow began to fall. Tithering had worked hard to have an unusually good service, his sermon was one of the best he had written—and here was this disgusting weather furnishing Anna Quinn with a just reason for not coming! The curate felt that he could hardly bear to go through the evensong for the benefit of a few bedraggled, up-gazing females.

As he entered the edifice—a fitting finale to a procession beginning with very small choristers and graduating to those within a fraction of the curate's height—he refrained from looking at the Gurley pew.

It was not until he clicked on the pulpit-light that he allowed himself a glance over the auditorium. His heart missed a beat, and then settled into a rhythmical reaction. Anna Quinn had kept her promise! She and Lucy were holding a hymnal between them. He fancied that he detected her mellow contralto, singing a second to Lucy's throaty soprano.

Standing with closed eyes, he followed the words of the hymn they were singing:

“Take thou my cup, and it
With joy or sorrow fill.
As best to thee may seem,
Choose thou my good or ill.”

Boyce Tithering gave out his text, in his richest voice.

He preached with fervour, even with fire; taking stock of but one feminine face upturned to his.

First begging his followers to reflect upon the virtues of chastity, modesty and obedience, he described a wayward woman struggling toward the light of Gethsemane through such a storm as was now beating against the very doors of the church; that wet, chilling snow outside was no colder than her colourful heart before grace touched her, yet, when she became a follower of light how glorious her subjugation!—if at this moment there was in the church or beyond the doors such a woman, cold, colourful, troubled, let her come and find what she had failed to find in the outer world, compassion, tolerance—divine love. Let her come, on this stormy night . . .

The curate was trembling when he finished his sermon, and to his surprise, on returning to the chancel, he found his forehead wet. During the prayer-hymn, breathed by the smallest choristers, he hid his face in his hands; wondering what Anna Quinn was thinking of him.

The choristers sang, sweetly,

“Teach me to live that I may dread
The grave as little as my bed.”

In his earlier days of consecration to the Lord, Boyce Tithering had not infrequently chosen this hallowed moment for a not insincere, if transitory, commune with his Maker—but that was before he had become conscious of the women in the nave, whose eyes were continually upon him.

After the service, Lucy Gurley fairly clung to the curate's hand.

“Your sermon!” faltered the infatuated damsel. “It almost made me wish myself lost, that I might seek your

door and find such compassion. Oh, Mr. Tithering,—it was wonderful!”

Tithering was looking at Anna Quinn, while he answered,

“I’m glad you liked it, Miss Lucy. Where’s your aunt?—not laid up with a cold, I hope.”

Less tactfully than usual, his hand passed Lucy on.

“You came!” he said, to the widow.

“Yes,” she replied, shaking hands.

He was inclined to stammer. “So good of you—in such nasty weather—”

“As if inclement weather might offer any excuse for breaking a promise!” Her eyes were like brown pools, and the curves of her mouth were not entirely mocking.

He dropped her hand, because he was tempted to capture both of her hands—to forget every presence but hers and keep her talking as long as he could.

“Did you like my sermon?” he asked, at random.

Her retort was typically her own:

“Was it sincere?”

“Can you doubt it?” quickly.

“Yes—knowing how few practice what they preach.”

“I wish I had the chance to prove my sincerity to you.”

“To prove yourself possessed of such attributes as compassion and divine love?” Her brows arched.

“To prove,” in a low voice, “that I meant every word I uttered.”

In passing on, she was reflective—provocative.

“How could it be proved?—unless by a wayward woman.”

He took a step after her. “You are still inclined toward incredulity.”

She spoke over her shoulder—pursuing the topic. “How could such extravagant divinity be proved, except by a wandering Magdalen?—a touch of Third Avenue melodrama?”

The glance she gave him was quizzing as her tongue.

The curate stepped back, red again. Third-Avenue melodrama!—as if his

discourse smacked of the preposterous, the garish, the hectic!

But, as he turned to the next worshiper in line, he comforted himself with the fact that she had braved the stormy evening to come. He shook hands with the last of his devotees, making them palpitate by his geniality and the flattering pressure of his fingers.

Wet snow was still falling and the night was setting in intensely cold, as Boyce Tithering left the church and took the sheltered path that led to the parish house. At dinner, he was talkative with Mrs. Curdy. Afterwards, he ascended to his study, where the curtains were drawn and a coal fire burned cheerily in the grate.

Selecting a volume of fiction, he made himself comfortable in an easy chair—but he could not interest himself in the story, continually imagining against the printed pages a fastidious face turned over a shrugging shoulder.

He reviewed, somewhat slowly, her phrases: “extravagant divinity” and “wandering Magdalen” and “melodrama.” She had evidently thought him flowery, conventional. The next time he would preach his most intellectual sermon, one tried by time and popularity. He would prove himself adequate to her every demand, clever as well as humane. She was clever, if not humane. The glance she had given him over her shoulder fairly reeked with slightly diabolical wit. That wit harnessed by religious fervours, that sparkling face joyful or sorrowful, as he chose to make it!

The curate, thus philandering, became agreeably drowsy. The volume he held sagged until it rested on his knees.

He put out his hand, and clicked off the reading-lamp; casting the study into shadow save for the subdued glow of the coals in the grate. Resting his head in the hollow of his chair-cushion, his thoughts became somnolent—delicately sensual.

Finally, the curate napped.

A draught of air from an opening door broke his slumbers.

Below, there was a murmur of voices in the hall of the parish house.

He heard Mrs. Curdy's purr:

"I hardly think Mr. Tithering can see you tonight; Sunday is his hard day; suppose you come back in the morning."

A woman's voice—dank as the weather. "Tomorrow? No."

The curate arose and went to his study door.

"Who is it, Mrs. Curdy?" he called.

"Someone in trouble," answered the dank voice.

A disheveled woman in a tawdry cape came rapidly up the stairs.

At the top, she paused and threw her hands over her eyes with a strangeness of manner that made Tithering fall back, in alarm.

"I will see you below, my good woman," he protested.

His nocturnal visitor paid scant heed to the protestation. She came into his study so precipitately that he fell back another step. To his surprise, her next action was to shut the door, lock it, and remove the key.

Involuntarily, the curate's hand flew to his watch-pocket. His drawing-room attractions did not, perhaps, include the quality of intrepidity. In addition to being surprised by this sudden caller, he was frankly startled.

"My good woman!" he began again, and swallowed.

She did not state her mission, but set her back against the door, breathing audibly.

The dull glow from the grate emphasized some sort of patch over one of her eyes, her streaming hair, the tawdry cape which enveloped her head and shoulders, the sogged soles and heels of shoes whose tongues protruded as if the boots had been pulled on for some hasty flight. Tithering, taking her for some derelict cowed by one of the nameless catastrophes of the streets, collected his wits. There was really nothing to fear, though she had locked

the door as if her intent were evil, even theft.

He spoke, in some asperity, to her.

"If you are in trouble, the first thing to do is to evince your sanity by unlocking my door. Then, I will hear what you have to say."

She merely huddled against the door panels, buried her face in the crook of her arm—and the key in the folds of her cape. She was still breathing too hard for speech.

His unease made him pull the cord of the reading-lamp. With the room more illuminated, he was able to assure himself that she was only some half-crazed prostitute who had run into the parish house as a rat sometimes turns into the wrong hole.

But, turning from the reading-lamp, he noticed for the first time that the butt of a revolver protruded from a pocket of his visitor's cape. His acquaintance with deadly weapons was limited.

He cleared his throat, before he said, "Wh-at do you want?"

"Help." She did not lift her face from her arm.

"Money?"

"No."

"Then—in heaven's name—what?"

"I heard your sermon this evening. I'd just killed a man. Blown his brains out." Her hand closed over the pistol in her pocket. "I'd ducked into your church, for hiding."

"—Murder—?"

The curate was aghast.

Face still hidden, fingers clutching, she began to speak, graphically:

"He had me. I was in hell. So I bumped him off. I hid in a pew of your church till it was locked up. Then I broke through one of the windows with a brass flower-vase, and came here."

Her voice roughened, and broke:

"Oh, God, I've only made bad worse by what I've done! Preacher," more faintly, "if you'll stand by me—as your Christ stood by that stoned woman—I'll give myself up, and take what's due me. You talked about compassion and

divine love. You talked about the light of Gethsemane for women outside the church doors—Help me—I'm in bad—!"

She slid into a shapeless heap at his feet, with the weapon hidden somewhere in her cape.

The curate stood inanimate, looking down at his first case of unadulterated tragedy. It was his introduction to womanhood in the raw. Doting ladies, harassed by petty troubles and rendered tearful by trivial griefs, he had solaced in goodly numbers. Of late, he had visioned the solacing of a more colorful personality in Anna Quinn. Folly in the raw was new to him.

For the fraction of a second, he hesitated between a divinity that might have stooped and lifted up this sodden suppliant at his feet, and a "divinity" that passed on the other side. Tithering, it must be admitted, possessed neither the nature nor the inclination to literally follow in the footsteps of his Master.

He tiptoed to the telephone, and noiselessly detached the receiver.

He gave an emergency call: "I want a policeman."

The woman with the weapon made a slight movement.

He repeated the call, more urgently. And, because he saw the revolver again and her finger closing over the trigger—because his drawing-room tricks did not indulge courage—a wave of physical fear unmanned the comely curate.

This murderess could, if she wished, blow out his brains, as she had blown out the brains of her paramour!

A horror of sudden death, from which he prayed each Sunday in the litany to be delivered, made Tithering drop on his hands and knees behind the telephone stand. He had knelt with his hands shrouding his face, while the choristers sweetly sang:

"Teach me to live that I may dread
The grave as little as my bed."

How much he dreaded the grave was

evident in his palsied hands running along the cord of the telephone, and his panicky reiteration, "I want a policeman! I want a policeman! I want a policeman!"

. . . A sound of feminine laughter in his study struck him into silence.

The woman was laughing—with a light, familiar challenge!

Tithering felt his mouth go dry.

He looked over the edge of the telephone stand, and sank back on his heels. The "murderess" was taking off the tawdry cape and pinning up her hair. Her sleeves fell away from elbows white and polished. He saw her remove the patch from her eye, uncock the revolver, blow through its empty barrels—and turn mocking eyes of mahogany in his direction.

Anna Quinn's own voice came to him, over the protective stand:

"I dropped in, *en masque*, to see how much sincerity lay behind your sermon. I was an actress, before I married my beloved, brilliant Roger Quinn; I learned from him that the only way to know a human being was to test him. Forgive me if my methods were melodramatic. Preachers so often depict Magdalens that way!"

Still sitting on his heels, Tithering stared at her. In a weakened semblance of his ordinary voice, he corrected his call for aid. "A mistake, Central. Never mind. Everything is all right."

He put the receiver on the hook, and watched the widow unlock his study door.

"Good-night," said Anna Quinn. Consoling, "I shan't tell Lucy that I've poached on her curate's own hunting-ground."

Pulling her cape about her, she went out of the study and down the stairs.

He heard the opening and closing of the parish house door. When alone, he rose and looked at himself in a mirror over the desk where he penned his sermons—he saw that his countenance was the color of a lemon pie.

The curate of Gethsemane dropped back into his chair and stared blankly at the fire.

The Swine of Circe

By Kathryn White Ryan

IN boarding school he ranked as one of the "poor" boys. When he visited his Aunt Martha in the summer he was constantly admonished to keep his muddy feet out of the parlour; and frequently when guests arrived she found it simplest for him to eat in the kitchen.

He was a sensitive little chap.

When he grew up his employers spoke of him as "what's-his-name." His married sister, socially effulgent, did not include him in her most exclusive list. What was the use? One game of bridge would exhaust his whole week's salary. The woman with dimpled face who once had smiled, flashed indignation and tore away her small white hand when one presumptuous day he placed his trembling fingers on it.

Childhood, boyhood, manhood had each in turn brought him the hurt of small, pale ignominies. They clung about him. He could not shake them off. He felt his life had accumulated nothing but memories to shrink from. If only he could forget the Past! Blot it out utterly, shake himself free of it, make a new life for himself! Perhaps there was a way. Well, if he were determined enough—genuine enough. . . .

He worked in secret, and for years, at the thing he loved. He probed into hearts; he trailed after words that fled into thickets. He wrote. He brought to light wisdom of a joyous, laughing kind.

And finally through the dull average of his days, he began to detect a slow piercing of something sharply exultant, victorious.

He saw his name flare out at night over the entrance of a great theater.

He saw it proclaimed upon many printed sheets. He heard it whispered by strangers as he went by them.

Fame! He had achieved Fame. Fame, the one magic that could accomplish the annihilation of the Past!

He leaned back in his chair. He glanced about his charming rooms with satisfaction. He tapped his cigarette slowly, thoughtfully. He lingered over every little act, over every moment as a connoisseur sips good wine. Life was so delightful, so new, so free of the old hurts, nothing was left of them. He blew the smoke in curling, contemplative puffs.

But a knock came to the outer door. He walked back and opened it. A round-faced man with a diamond in his cravat stood before him.

"Good old Jack!" the visitor shouted, "Yes sir, it is you, and that's a God's fact! I didn't believe it until this minute. You've become somebody after all! Don't remember me? Say, who took your part in that scrap over them apples your Aunt Martha wanted? Who—"

"Jim Bennett from the other side of the pasture!" He tried to greet him then as befits old friends; "What's the news?"

"Well the fact of the matter is, I'm in a tight place just at present and I thought—say, you wouldn't happen to have fifty dollars you could spare?"

In a few moments he was gone, round face beaming. But his host had scarcely closed the door upon him and returned to his writing table, head lowered, eyes sober with memories, than another visitor arrived.

"You've moved up all right, old man,"

this one winked insinuatingly. "Ever stop to think of that little deal of ours? You know what I mean . . . Lucky it turned out as it did. Oh, I understand! You *had* to take a chance *those* days—"

His doorbell now began to ring quite continuously.

Horace Smedly, his cousin, always an acrid sort, had a new and even more irritating note than usual in his remarks.

"Pretty different from the old days, eh what?" he commented strolling about insolently, "and it all comes from making a go of one silly little play (of course I assume you have no illusions about your play?). It hasn't anything like the quality of your early things—too bad you had to commercialize so."

A stranger flicking his hat back to a precarious edge extracted from an inner pocket a wallet and from it drew a paper: "Mr. Wallace? Mr. J. Hartford Wallace? I have a little matter here—unpaid—oversight of course. Your name is so well known now my party was able to look you up . . . Paid this years ago you say? Sorry, but . . ."

When he was rid of him a gentleman of soberly ornate appearance called.

"I have been commissioned," he said eyeing the graceful appointments of the room, "I have been commissioned by our building committee to lay before you our needs . . . Perhaps a stained glass window? Your name in gold? . . . There is a singular force to a donation made by a famous man. And if the man be one who at any time—even his least promising period—formed a part of the community, it becomes a spur to that community—it illustrates the—er—the, I might say the unlooked for generosity of the Maker—"

The postman left many letters. His old school wrote mentioning the pride it took in having him for one of its sons. And enclosed a printed slip that referred with loud implication to deteriorated finances. His publisher wrote importuning for more data concerning his early life. His sister breaking through the fraternal lassitude of years ardently penned: "I have always been so proud of you! I was wondering if you would not care to send Archibald to some smart school next winter."

He felt the need of diversion. He decided to accept one of the invitations to tea. As he walked across the drawing-room who should rise up before him but the dimpled woman it had taken him years to forget. She chirped gay greetings. She put her hand through his arm. He felt it flutter there while she forced her friends to observe that she claimed him. He found the incident amusing; but smiling down into her vain pretty eyes he slowly removed her fingers and walked on.

When he returned to his apartment he stood braced against the door, eyes wide, puzzled. What was happening? This wasn't new life he was getting! This was the old done over, dregs of the old—the Past stalking again, rising up, crawling out of its pit like the swine of Circe.

He pulled aside the silken curtains of his window and the bright sign over the theater flashed at him. Fame! Is Fame after all the one thing that does *not* obliterate the Past? Does Fame, indeed, not make it walk forever beside one?

He felt foolish, as if a distasteful joke were being played upon him.

He was a very sensitive chap.



IT is the tragedy of actresses that, by the time they are mellow, deep and subtle enough to play the parts of *grandes amoureuses*, they no longer are young enough. . . . It is the tragedy of all women.

The Cheque

By Joseph Upper

I

WEST of the city, sparsely wooded hills made a jagged horizon line. Here and there a church spire reared itself among the trees. A hazy sky hung like a soft curtain above the hills.

John Marvin sat before the Underwood in the second office of the Solicitor's suite. He looked out of the window over the tops of city buildings and farther away across the roofs of city houses. There were indistinct blotches after that which represented various clusters of suburban dwellings. Then came the hills surmounted by the shadowy woods, and then the soft, hazy sky.

There were three offices in the Solicitor's suite. The first, the one in back of John Marvin, was the sacred retreat of the Solicitor himself. The second, where John Marvin was sitting, did duty as a library, office, and reception room. The third was given over to several attorneys and their stenographers.

Scattered through the department were other offices belonging to the Solicitor. John Marvin came from one of these. He was now doing overtime. Every evening a stenographer from some one of the Solicitor's offices sat before the Underwood in the second office of the Solicitor's suite and did overtime.

Doing overtime was simply waiting on the pleasure of the Solicitor. Sometimes the stenographer sat for hours waiting for the three bells from the inner office which meant, "I want to write a letter," and the bells did not ring; and finally the Solicitor would emerge

from his official nest, wearing his hat and overcoat, and would observe gruffly, "You needn't remain any longer." Then he would go away, and the stenographer would close his desk, shut the windows, turn out the lights, lock the office and go away, too.

On other evenings you did not have to wait longer than half an hour, and again the three bells rang irritably at frequent intervals and the keys of the Underwood clicked off long letters to The Honorable, the Attorney General, or to The Honorable, The Secretary of War.

John Marvin had been in the Solicitor's office for five years. He came as a young man. He was now an old young man.

He was, he reflected, one of the many old young men who hurried back and forth through the halls of the department. They were all failures. In the general scheme of things they really amounted to nothing. They did certain things well, things that they had been doing for a long time. That was all. They were exactly what their superiors took them for—office appliances. When the Solicitor wanted to expectorate, there was the cuspidor; when he took up his pen, the massive ink bottle was conveniently near. If a carefree breeze threatened to start a revolution among the documents on his desk, he had only to reach for a paper-weight. And when he wanted to write a letter he had only to press a button three times.

John Marvin gazed wearily at the jagged horizon line of straggling woods.

"What without asking hither hurried hence," he muttered to himself.

The Solicitor emerged from the recesses of his official privacy. He had his hat on.

"I won't need you any more tonight," he threw over his shoulder at John Marvin. "Don't forget to close up here."

He disappeared into the deserted hall.

John Marvin rose. Grasping the top of the typewriter desk he sent the Underwood to its mahogany cavern. Then he closed the windows, locked the door and hurried noiselessly down the empty corridor.

An hour later he sat at the table in his third-floor bedroom writing furiously.

II

TO WRITE or not to write had always been the question with John Marvin. While he had pondered it the years had sped by. Now it must be answered. And in his third-floor bedroom he was striving to answer it. Between the hours of seven and twelve he laboured nightly, to the concern of his landlady and the amusement of the other roomers; laboured to lift himself out of the terrible slough of failure into which he saw himself slowly sinking.

Where he had once worked hopefully in the spare hours of his leisure, he now worked feverishly late into the night. Hope, pursued by fear, had broken into the run of desperation, and while the gas lamps under his window flickered and flared, and other young men passed back and forth under them to dance hall or theater, John Marvin sat at his writing-table spurring on his galloping pen.

The morning mail piled his plate full of thick envelopes among which he hunted eagerly in the fresh hope of finding a single thin one. Occasionally a rejected manuscript came home accompanied by an encouraging note from some editor. That was always a red-letter day for John Marvin. Then his unquenchable faith in his own power burned brightly once more and

he told himself that he was coming, that he would arrive before long.

Yet the day was outwardly the same as other days. Through the dismal hours of business his Underwood recorded the multitudinous legal problems which beset the Solicitor. If it was his turn to do overtime, he sat and stared out of the window of the second office in the Solicitor's suite at the rim of hills beyond the city. That evening would find him again at his writing-table racing with time towards the goal of literary achievement. But there would be a compensating zest to his labors on such days, following, as it were, a nod of editorial approval. The strength of his refreshed hope went into his galloping pen after such days, and that inky steed responded as to the inspiration of the home stretch.

They were indeed straws which to John Marvin indicated the direction of the wind. Even he often smiled at the few and frail wisps of encouragement which he had seized upon so eagerly as prophecies of his future greatness. But he dared not despair.

He knew that when he despaired there would be nothing left. When he laid down his pen and acknowledged the futility of his labor he would be ready to die.

Sometimes at the desk in the second office of the Solicitor's suite, when his eyes traveled across the massed roofs of the city to the uneven woods that topped the faraway hills, John Marvin pictured to himself the death he would die. Through those hills stretched the muddy coils of the Potomac. Where it glided most silently, most like a huge, wise serpent, high cliffs rose up to meet the overhanging sky. John Marvin had wandered on those cliffs. After one reached their top the sky was not so near. Tall trees held it at arm's length. Standing beneath them you looked down at the mysterious, gliding river. John Marvin had looked and looked until he saw himself, a misshapen mass, on the cruel rocks that raised their sharp outlines warningly along the river's edge. Yes,

when it was determined that he could not write he would . . .

At four-thirty when he left the office he watched the horde of clerks swarming out of the Department. . . . A crowd of cockroaches issuing from an old desk. Somebody moved it and they all came running out. . . . They were unsightly and ludicrous. We killed as many of them as we could. The office is full of them.

John Marvin always saw himself as one of this ill-assorted multitude. Some of them were old, some of them were crippled, and all of them, save the very youngest ones, looked exactly what they were, failures, men and women who did little things well.

John Marvin felt his limbs drag, his shoulders stoop, his hair whiten. He imagined his eyes reflected the sickening look of failure in so many of the eyes about him. Then his thoughts reverted to the winding river and the sheer cliffs with the sharp rocks about their feet.

" . . . And without asking whither hurried hence," he muttered.

Then he smiled and went home to his third-floor bedroom, his writing-table, and his racing pen.

III

WHEN the manuscript of his play had been returned to him for the eighth time, John Marvin sat down to face the fact that his pen promised him no deliverance from his departmental existence. He still sat at his writing-table night after night, fighting the hopelessly unequal battle between literary ideals and economic necessities, but his hope of freedom was gone.

Doing overtime in the second office of the Solicitor's suite, his eyes sought the thinly fringed hills that marred the evenness of the horizon line, and he seemed to see the dark river coiled about the base of the sheer cliffs. Always now the jagged rocks stood out prominently in the picture, and on them he could see the crumpled form of a man who had willed to rise and had ter-

ribly fallen. A breeze blowing up the river fluttered the clothing that held the mangled flesh and bones of the dead thing.

John Marvin passed an unsteady hand across his damp forehead. The air from the street was uncomfortably chill. He rose and shut the window.

In the first of the three offices a bell rang peremptorily. It rang only once. That was for the messenger. The door of the second office opened and Mr. Stead entered. He crossed the room and pushed open the door of the Solicitor's sanctum. John Marvin looked at the old man and shuddered. Which was the worst, this or the fluttering thing on the rocks at the river's edge? He could see himself gradually passing into the semblance of Mr. Stead. For years the aged messenger had been dragging himself about the corridors of the Department, the personification of all those qualities that count for nothing except to those whose convenience they serve, and for relatively little to them. Mr. Stead was a genial man, a stupid man, hopelessly mediocre and hopelessly futile.

The messenger came out of the private office followed by the Solicitor.

"You needn't stay any longer," volunteered the official.

The two men passed into the hall. To John Marvin there seemed to be only slight difference between them. One had failed and the other had succeeded, but what had either accomplished? What was accomplishment, anyway? Perhaps it was different things to different people—people of different makeup. Yes, it must be that. Then perhaps the Solicitor had accomplished something after all, only it was not anything that *he* was willing to call accomplishment. Doubtless what he wanted to do would not be regarded as accomplishment by the Solicitor.

Before he closed the window his eyes wandered over the crowding roofs to the unevenly bearded hills through which stretched the tortuous length of the forbidding river. Yes, he would go out and stand on those cliffs once more.

The dead thing on the rocks that the breeze played with was better off than Mr. Stead. There was little difference now between Mr. Stead and that. Mr. Stead limped around and spoke, and that only stirred when the wind rounded the curve in the river and swept along under the cliffs. Tomorrow he would ask for some leave. Then he would go out and stand on those cliffs and . . .

He closed the window abruptly and pulled down the shade. That night he did no writing.

IV

GRAY clouds pressed down upon the towering pines, which repulsed them with extended arms. A buzzard described with circles over the sullen river. Occasionally a beam of sunlight, filtered by a grim cloud into a stream of pale yellow, traveled restlessly up and down the depressing landscape.

John Marvin stood on the edge of the overhanging cliff, his arm encircling the trunk of an isolated tree. He had only to release his hold and let the weight of his body propel him a step or two forward, and settle forever the question of his success or failure. There would be a swift, delicious fall through the resistless air, much like the sensation which sometimes immediately preceded sleep; then a dull, heavy shock. His limbs would quiver and then relax. The pale beam of sunlight would play up and down the rocky margin of the river, occasionally darting about the huddled human wreck. The breeze, rounding the lower curve of the stream, would stir the dark garments and they would flap like sullen sails in a feeble wind.

He shivered and turned back abruptly to an old fallen tree on the edge of the wood. Why was he obsessed with this desire for death? Was it after all the only alternative to success? He sat down with his elbows on his knees, his hands supporting his head. He felt weak and sick. The pic-

ture of the dead thing on the rocks came and went before his eyes. In and out, alternating with it like a cut-back in a moving picture, followed the memory of the messenger, Stead. To become a human automaton like that; to sit day after day before a typewriter tapping off letters to The Honorable, the Attorney General. No, the thing on the rocks was preferable. He started to get up.

A frolicking breeze leaped over the edge of the cliff and whirled up a cloud of dust and papers in front of the fallen tree. John Marvin looked idly at the disturbed rubbish, the aftermath of picnics. Paper napkins, the cover of a candy box, bits of a wooden plate. What was that? He reached down and picked up the dancing strip of paper that had attracted his notice. It was a cheque.

Probably incomplete. Made a mistake and threw it away.

But his eyes detected no mistake. It was a cheque on a local bank for fifty thousand dollars, payable to an individual with a fairly ordinary name, signed by another. He turned it over. It was not endorsed. Was it possible that the owner had lost it? He looked again at its face. Then he saw. It was dated April 31, 1919. A joke. A passing pleasantry. Such nonsense as one expected of clerks on picnics.

But he remained where he was, holding the pseudo cheque in his hand, looking at it. There was something about it that held his attention. His thought refused to leave it, or rather his thought, soaring off on the wings of speculation, carried the facetious bit of paper along with it.

Suppose it were genuine, and his. Fifty thousand dollars. Even less. Twenty-five thousand dollars. Twenty thousand. Ten. Five. He wouldn't be thinking of suicide then. He wouldn't be doing overtime in the second office of the Solicitor's suite. He wouldn't be writing letters to The Honorable, the Attorney General. He would . . .

His thought lost itself in a labyrinth

of imaginary acquisitions, comforts, luxuries, pleasures. He could leave his third-floor bedroom and take an apartment. He began to select his furniture. There were books he had wanted to buy. He filled the shelves of his library. He could afford good seats at the best theaters. He would eat—at—

Suddenly he stopped and crushed the silly strip of paper as though it were an insect that had stung him. A sharp tug on the silken cord of reality had brought him out of the labyrinth, and he stood blinking stupidly at the daylight. *He wasn't thinking of his work at all!*

The realization struck John Marvin like a cold wind. It wasn't his desire to create that had gone dancing off in ecstasy at the thought of possessing a few thousands. It was his *desire to be comfortable*. He wanted comfort and luxury and pleasure. In his mental acquisition of these his work, his art, had been utterly forgotten.

It was for this then that he had been torturing himself. It was not failure, actual failure, that he feared. It was discomfort, the withholding of the things that came to those who made money. It was not the strength or weakness of his pen that he had been thinking of. It was only how long he would have to work in the Department, how long he would have to occupy a third-floor bedroom. It was not the fear of artistic but that of financial failure which had become an obsession with him.

He recalled the figure of the old messenger, Stead. Why had he allowed it

to depress him so? He knew now. It was not because Mr. Stead had been passing up and down the corridors of the Department for so many years. It was because Mr. Stead was poor.

And this was his pride in his work! This was his enthusiasm for what he believed to be his art! It was for this that he had been furiously writing night after night, in order that he might have a softer cushion, a more elaborate meal, better seats at the theater, finer clothes. It was not an artist's zeal. It was a small man's covetousness, the sloth of the mediocre.

John Marvin opened his clenched hand and let the crumpled ball of paper fall back among the picnickers' débris. He rose and walked slowly to the edge of the cliff. The jagged rocks on which he had pictured the lifeless thing, its garments fluttering in the breeze, smiled up at him drily. The river, more than ever like a wise serpent, glided silently around the base of the cliff. Where a stray sunbeam fell upon its gently undulating surface, it seemed to John Marvin as though the huge reptile slowly closed and opened one large eye.

V

THAT evening John Marvin sat at the table in his third-floor bedroom writing. His pen traveled unhurriedly over the paper. Like the tortoise in the old fable, it seemed confident of winning the race, of arriving first at the goal of achievement.



WHEN a girl to whom you have made intermittent love for months lets you see her in her kimono, it means one of two things—either a last desperate play to win you, or that she has decided to marry someone else.



Attractiveness

By John F. Lord

SHE was neither beautiful, vivacious nor clever. She hadn't a compelling personality. She wasn't rich. She lacked social distinction. It was extremely difficult to tell what attracted him to her. Perhaps it was merely because she was some other man's wife.



If I Were King

By John McClure

IF I were king of Egypt
Then might I give ye gold,
And red wine, and white wine,
And heirlooms old.

If I were king of Fairyland
Then might I make ye glee
With white bread, and brown bread,
And elfin trinketry.

But I'm no king—nonnay! nonnay!
Dull ass, to whom belongs
Only his breeches and his bray
And these uncomely songs.



EVERY man has to believe in something. Sometimes it is a god; sometimes it is a woman; sometimes it is a scheme for putting a kick into grape-juice.



A MAN first falls in love and then thinks of marriage. A woman first figures out the marriage and then falls in love.



THE greatest friendship is found between two people who understand and respect each other's dishonesty.

Dalrymple Goes Wrong

By F. Scott Fitzgerald

IN the millenium an educational genius will write a book to be given to every young man on the date of his disillusion. This work will have the flavour of Montaigne's essays and Samuel Butler's note-books — and a little of Tolstoi and Marcus Aurelius. It will be neither cheerful nor pleasant but will contain numerous passages of striking humour. Since first-class minds never believe anything very strongly until they've experienced it, its value will be purely relative . . . all people over thirty will refer to it as "depressing."

This prelude belongs to the story of a young man who lived, as you and I do, before the book.

II

THE generation which numbered Bryan Dalrymple drifted out of adolescence to a mighty fanfare of trumpets. Bryan played the star in an affair which included a Lewis gun and a nine day romp behind the retreating German lines, so luck or sentiment awarded him a row of medals and on his arrival in the States he was told that he was second in importance only to General Pershing and Sergeant York. This was a lot of fun. The governor of his state, a stray congressman and a citizens' committee gave him enormous smiles and "By God, Sirs" on the dock at Hoboken; there were newspaper reporters and photographers who said "would you mind" and "if you could just"; and back in his home town there were old ladies, the rims of whose eyes grew red as they talked to him, and girls who hadn't remembered him so well since his father's business went bad in nineteen-twelve.

But when the shouting died he realized that for a month he had been the house guest of the mayor, that he had only fourteen dollars in the world, and that "the name that will live forever in the annals and legends of this state" was already living there very quietly and obscurely.

One morning he lay late in bed and just outside his door he heard the upstairs maid talking to the cook. The upstairs maid said that Mrs. Hawkins, the mayor's wife, had been trying for a week to hint Dalrymple out of the house. He left at eleven o'clock in intolerable confusion asking that his trunk be sent to Mrs. Beebe's boarding house.

Dalrymple was twenty-three and he had never worked. His father had given him two years at the state university and passed away about the time of his son's nine day romp, leaving behind him some mid-Victorian furniture and a thin packet of folded papers that turned out to be grocery bills. Young Dalrymple had very keen grey eyes, a mind that delighted the army psychological examiners, a trick of having read it — whatever it was — some time before, and a cool hand in a hot situation. But these things did not save him a final, unresigned sigh when he realized that he had to go to work — right away.

It was early afternoon when he walked into the office of Theron G. Macy, who owned the largest wholesale grocery house in town. Plump, prosperous, wearing a pleasant but quite unhumorous smile, Theron G. Macy greeted him warmly.

"Well — How do, Bryan. What's on your mind?"

To Dalrymple straining with his admission, his own words, when they came, sounded like an arab beggar's whine for alms.

"Why — this question of a job," ("This question of job" seemed somehow more clothed than just "a job.")

"A job?" An almost imperceptible breeze blew across Mr. Macy's expression.

"You see, Mr. Macy," continued Dalrymple, "I feel I'm wasting time. I want to get started at something. I had several chances about a month ago but they all seem to have — gone —"

"Let's see," interrupted Mr. Macy. "What were they?"

"Well, just at the first the Governor said something about a vacancy on his staff. I was sort of counting on that for awhile but I hear he's given it to Allen Gregg, you know, son of G. P. Gregg. He sort of forgot what he said to me — just talking I guess."

"You ought to push those things."

"Then there was that engineering expedition, but they decided they'd have to have a man who knew hydraulics, so they couldn't use me unless I paid my own way."

"You had just a year at the University?"

"Two. But I didn't take any science or mathematics. Well, the day the battalion paraded, Mr. Peter Jordan said something about a vacancy in his store. I went around there to-day and I found he meant a sort of floor-walker — and then you said something one day —" he paused and waited for the older man to take him up, but noting only a minute wince continued "— about a position so I thought I'd come and see you."

"There was a position," confessed Mr. Macy reluctantly, "but since then we've filled it." He cleared his throat again. "You've waited quite a while."

"Yes, I suppose I did. Everybody told me there was no hurry — and I'd had these various offers."

Mr. Macy delivered a paragraph on present day opportunities which Dalrymple's mind completely skipped.

"Have you had any business experience?"

"I worked on a ranch two summers as a rider."

"Oh, well," Mr. Macy disparaged this neatly and then continued, "What do you think you're worth?"

"I don't know."

"Well, Bryan, I tell you, I'm willing to strain a point and give you a chance."

Dalrymple nodded.

"Your salary won't be much. You'll start by learning the stock. Then you'll come in the office for awhile. Then you'll go on the road. When could you begin?"

"How about tomorrow?"

"All right. Report to Mr. Hanson in the stock room. He'll start you off."

He continued to regard Dalrymple steadily until the latter, realizing that the interview was over, rose awkwardly.

"Well, Mr. Macy, I'm certainly much obliged."

"That's all right. Glad to help you, Bryan."

After an irresolute moment, Dalrymple found himself in the hall. His forehead was covered with perspiration, and the room had not been hot.

"Why the devil did I thank the son-of-a-gun?" he muttered.

III

NEXT morning Mr. Hanson informed him coldly of the necessity of punching the time-clock at seven every morning and delivered him for instruction into the hands of a fellow worker, one Charley Moore.

Charley was twenty-six, with that faint musk of weakness hanging about him that is often mistaken for the scent of evil. It took no psychological examiner to decide that he had drifted into indulgence and laziness as casually as he had drifted into life and was to drift out. He was pale and his clothes reeked of smoke; he enjoyed burlesque shows, billiards and Robert Service, and was always looking back upon his last intrigue or forward to his next

one. In his youth his taste had run to loud ties but now it seemed to have faded, like his vitality, and was expressed in pale lilac four-in-hands and indeterminate coloured collars. Charley was listlessly struggling that losing struggle against mental, moral and physical anemia that take place ceaselessly on the lower fringe of the middle classes.

The first morning he stretched himself on a row of cereal cartons and carefully went over the limitations of the Theron G. Macy Company.

"It's a piker organization. My Gosh! Lookit what they give me. I'm quittin' in a coupla months. Slush! Me stay with this bunch!"

The Charley Moores are always going to change jobs next month. They do, once or twice in their careers, after which they sit around comparing their last job with the present one, to the infinite disparagement of the latter.

"What do you get?" asked Dalrymple curiously.

"Me? I get sixty." This rather defiantly.

"Did you start at sixty?"

"Me? No, I started at thirty-five. He told me he'd put me on the road after I learned the stock. That's what he tells 'em all."

"How long've you been here?" asked Dalrymple with a sinking sensation.

"Me? Four years. My last year, too, you bet your boots."

Dalrymple rather resented the presence of the store detective as he resented the time-clock, and he came in to contact with him almost immediately through the rule against smoking. This rule was a thorn in his side. He was accustomed to his three or four cigarettes in a morning and after three days without it, he followed Charley Moore by a circuitous route up a flight of back stairs to a little balcony where they indulged in peace. But this was not for long. One day in his second week, the detective met him in a nook of the stairs, on his descent, and told him sternly that next time he'd be reported

to Mr. Macy. Dalrymple felt like an errant school boy.

Unpleasant facts came to his knowledge. There were "cave dwellers" in the basement who had worked there for ten or fifteen years at sixty dollars a month, rolling barrels and carrying boxes through damp, cement-walled corridors, lost in that echoing half-darkness between seven and five-thirty and, like himself, compelled several times a month to work until nine at night.

At the end of a month he stood in line and received forty dollars. He pawned a cigarette case and a pair of field glasses and managed to live — to eat, sleep and smoke. It was, however, a narrow scrape; as the ways and means of economy were a closed book to him and the second month brought no increase, he voiced his alarm.

"If you've got a drag with old Macy, maybe he'll raise you," was Charley's disheartening reply, "But he didn't raise *me* till I'd been here nearly two years."

"I've got to live," said Dalrymple simply. "I could get more pay as a baborer on the railroad but, Golly, I want to feel I'm where there's a chance to get ahead."

Charles shook his head skeptically and Mr. Macy's answer next day was equally unsatisfactory.

Dalrymple had gone to the office just before closing time.

"Mr. Macy, I'd like to speak to you."

"Why,— yes." The unhumorous smile appeared. The voice was faintly resentful.

"I want to speak to you in regard to more salary."

Mr. Macy nodded.

"Well," he said doubtfully, "I don't know exactly what you're doing. I'll speak to Mr. Hanson."

He knew exactly what Dalrymple was doing, and Dalrymple knew he knew.

"I'm in the stock room — and, sir, while I'm here I'd like to ask you how much longer I'll have to stay there."

"Why — I'm not sure exactly. Of

course it takes some time to learn the stock."

"You told me two months when I started."

"Yes. Well, I'll speak to Mr. Hanson."

Dalrymple paused irresolute.

"Thank you, sir."

Two days later he again appeared in the office with the result of a count that had been asked for by Mr. Hesse, the bookkeeper. Mr. Hesse was engaged and Dalrymple, waiting, began idly fingering a ledger on the stenographer's desk.

Half unconsciously he turned a page — he caught sight of his name — it was a salary list:

Dalrymple
Demming
Donahoe
Everett

His eyes stopped —

Everett\$60

So Tom Everett, Macy's weak-chinned nephew, had started at sixty — and in three weeks he had been out of the packing room and into the office.

So that was it! He was to sit and see man after man pushed over him: sons, cousins, sons of friends, irrespective of their capabilities, while *he* was cast for a pawn, with "going on the road" dangled before his eyes — put off with the stock remark, "I'll see; I'll look into it." At forty, perhaps, he would be a bookkeeper like old Hesse, tired, listless Hesse with dull routine for his stint and a dull background of boarding house conversation.

This was a moment when a genii should have pressed into his hand the book for disillusioned young men. But the book has not been written.

A great protest swelling into revolt surged up in him. Ideas half forgotten, chaotically perceived and assimilated, filled his mind. Get on — that was the rule of life — and that was all. How he did it, didn't matter — but to be Hesse or Charley Moore.

"I won't!" he cried aloud.

The book-keeper and the stenographers looked up in surprise.

"What?"

For a second Dalrymple stared — then walked up to the desk.

"Here's that data," he said brusquely.

"I can't wait any longer."

Mr. Hesse's face expressed surprise.

It didn't matter what he did — just so he got out of this rut. In a dream he stepped from the elevator into the stock room and walking to an unused aisle, sat down on a box, covering his face with his hands.

His brain was whirring with the frightful jar of discovering a platitude for himself.

"I've got to get out of this," he said aloud and then repeated, "I've got to get out," — and he didn't mean only out of Macy's wholesale house.

When he left at five-thirty, it was pouring rain but he struck off in the opposite direction from his boarding house, feeling, in the first cool moisture that oozed soggly through his old suit, an odd exultation and freshness. He wanted a world that was like walking through rain, even though he could not see far ahead of him, but fate had put him in the world of Mr. Macy's fetid store-rooms and corridors. At first merely the overwhelming need of change took him, then half plans began to formulate in his imagination.

"I'll go east — to a big city — meet people — bigger people — people who'll help me. Interesting work somewhere. My God, there *must* be."

With sickening truth it occurred to him that his facility for meeting people was limited. Of all places it was here in his own town that he should be known, was known — famous — before the waters of oblivion had rolled over him.

You had to cut corners, that was all. Pull — relationship — wealthy marriages —

For several miles the continued reiteration of this preoccupied him and then he perceived that the rain had become thicker and more opaque in the heavy grey of twilight and that the

houses were falling away. The district of full blocks, then of big houses, then of scattering little ones, passed and great sweeps of misty country opened out on both sides. It was hard walking here. The sidewalk had given place to a dirt road, streaked with furious brown rivulets that splashed and squashed around his shoes.

Cutting corners — the words began to fall apart, forming curious phrasings — little illuminated pieces of themselves. They resolved into sentences, each of which had a strangely familiar ring.

Cutting corners meant rejecting the old childhood principals that success came from faithfulness to duty, that evil was necessarily punished or virtue necessarily rewarded — that honest poverty was happier than corrupt riches.

It meant being hard.

This phrase appealed to him and he repeated it over and over. It had to do somehow with Mr. Macy and Charley Moore — the attitudes, the methods of each of them.

He stopped and felt his clothes. He was drenched to the skin. He looked about him and, selecting a place in the fence where a tree sheltered it, perched himself there.

In my credulous years — he thought — they told me that evil was a sort of dirty hue, just as definite as a soiled collar, but it seems to me that evil is only a manner of hard luck, or heredity — and — environment, or “being found out.” It hides in the vacillations of dubs like Charley Moore as certainly as it does in the intolerance of Macy and if it ever gets much more tangible it becomes merely an arbitrary label to paste on the unpleasant things in other people's lives.

In fact — he concluded — it isn't worth worrying over what's evil and what isn't. Good and evil aren't any standard to me — and they can be a devil of a bad hindrance when I want something. When I want something bad enough, common-sense tells me to go and take it — and not get caught.

And then suddenly Dalrymple knew what he wanted first. He wanted fifteen dollars to pay his over-due board bill.

With a furious energy he jumped from the fence, whipped off his coat and from its black lining cut with his knife a piece about five inches square. He made two holes near its edge and then fixed it on his face pulling his hat down to hold it in place. It flapped grotesquely and then dampened and clung to his forehead and cheeks.

Now The twilight had merged to dripping dusk black as pitch. He began to walk quickly back toward town, not waiting to remove the mask but watching the road with difficulty through the jagged eye-holes. He was not conscious of any nervousness. . . . the only tension was caused by a desire to do the thing as soon as possible.

He reached the first sidewalk, continued on until he saw a hedge far from any lamp-post and turned in behind it. Within a minute he heard several series of footsteps — he waited — it was a woman and he held his breath until she passed and then a man, a laborer. The next passer, he felt, would be what he wanted . . . the laborer's footfalls died far up the drenched street other steps grew near, grew suddenly louder.

Dalrymple braced himself.

“Put up your hands!”

The man stopped, uttered an absurd little grunt and thrust pudgy arms skyward.

Dalrymple went through the waistcoat.

“Now, you shrimp,” he said, setting his hand suggestively to his own hip pocket, “You run, and stamp — loud! If I hear your feet stop I'll put a shot after you!”

Then he stood there in sudden uncontrollable laughter as audibly frightened footsteps scurried away into the night.

After a moment he thrust the roll of bills into his pocket, snatched off his

mask and running quickly across the street, darted down an alley.

IV

YET, however, Dalrymple justified himself intellectually, he had many bad moments in the weeks immediately following his decision. The tremendous pressure of sentiment and inherited tradition kept raising riot with his attitude. He felt morally lonely.

The noon after his first venture he ate in a little lunch-room with Charley Moore and, watching him unspread the paper, waited for a remark about the hold-up of the day before. But either the hold-up was not mentioned or Charley wasn't interested. He turned listlessly to the sporting sheet, read Doctor Crane's crop of seasoned bromides, took in an editorial on ambition with his mouth slightly ajar, and then skipped to Mutt and Jeff.

Poor Charley—with his faint aura of evil and his mind that refused to focus, playing a lifeless solitaire with cast-off mischief.

Yet Charley belonged on the other side of the fence. In him could be stirred up all the flamings and denunciations of righteousness; he would weep at a stage heroine's lost virtue, he could become lofty and contemptuous at the idea of dishonour.

On my side, thought Dalrymple, there aren't any resting places; a man who's a strong criminal is after the weak criminals as well, so it's all guerilla warfare over here.

What will it all do to me—he thought, with a persistent weariness. Will it take the colour out of life with the honour? Will it scatter my courage and dull my mind?—de-spiritualize me completely—does it mean eventual barrenness, eventual remorse, failure?

With a great surge of anger, he would fling his mind upon the barrier—and stand there with the flashing bayonet of his pride. Other men who broke the laws of justice and charity lied to all the world. He at any rate

would not lie to himself. He was more than Byronic now: not the spiritual rebel, Don Juan; not the philosophical rebel, Faust; but a new psychological rebel of his own century—defying the sentimental a priori forms of his own mind—

Happiness was what he wanted—a slowly rising scale of gratifications of the normal appetites—and he had a strong conviction that the materials, if not the inspiration of happiness, could be bought with money.

V

THE night same that drew him out upon his second venture, and as he walked the dark street he felt in himself a great resemblance to a cat—a certain supple, swinging litheness. His muscles were rippling smoothly and sleekly under his spare, healthy flesh—he had an absurd desire to bound along the street, to run dodging among trees, to turn “cart-wheels” over soft grass.

It was not crisp, but in the air lay a faint suggestion of acerbity, inspirational rather than chilling.

“The Moon is down—I have not heard the clock!”

He laughed in delight at the line which an early memory had endowed with a hushed, awesome beauty.

He passed a man, and then another a quarter of mile afterward.

He was on Philmore Street now and it was very dark. He blessed the city council for not having put in new lamp-posts as a recent budget had recommended. Here was the red-brick Sterner residence which marked the beginning of the avenue; here was the Jordon house, the Eisenhaurs', the Dents', the Markhams', the Frasers'; the Hawkins', where he had been a guest; the Willoughby's, the Everetts', colonial and ornate; the little cottage where lived the Watts old maids between the imposing fronts of the Macys' and the Krupstadts'; the Craigs'—

Ah . . . *there!* He paused, wavered

violently — far up the street was a blot, a man walking, possibly a policeman. After an eternal second he found himself following the vague, ragged shadow of a lamp-post across a lawn, running bent very low. Then he was standing tense, without breath or need of it in the shadow of his limestone prey.

Interminably he listened — a mile off a cat howled, a hundred yards away another took up the hymn in a demoniacal snarl and he felt his heart dip and swoop, acting as shock absorber for his mind. There were other sounds; the faintest fragment of song far away; strident, gossiping laughter from a back porch diagonally across the alley; and crickets, crickets singing in the patched, patterned, moonlit grass of the yard. Within the house there seemed to lie an ominous silence. He was glad he did not know who lived here.

His slight shiver hardened to steel; the steel softened and his nerves became pliable as leather; gripping his hands he gratefully found them supple and taking out knife and pliers he went to work on the screen.

So sure was he that he was unobserved that, from the dining room where in a minute he found himself, he leaned out and carefully pulled the screen up into position, balancing it so it would neither fall by chance nor be a serious obstacle to a sudden exit.

Then he put the open knife in his coat pocket, took out his pocket flash and tiptoed around the room.

There was nothing here he could use — the dining room had never been included in his plans for the town was too small to permit disposing of silver.

As a matter of fact his plans were of the vaguest. He had found that with a mind like his, lucrative in intelligence, intuition and lightning decision, it was best to have but the skeleton of a campaign. The machine gun episode had taught him that. And he was afraid that a method preconceived would give him two points of view in

a crisis — and two points of view meant wavering.

He stumbled slightly on a chair, held his breath, listened, went on, found the hall, found the stairs, started up; the seventh stair creaked at his step, the ninth, the fourteenth. He was counting them automatically. At the third creak he paused again for over a minute — and in that minute he felt more alone than he had ever felt before. Between the lines on patrol, even when alone, he had had behind him the moral support of half a billion people; now he was alone, pitted against that same moral pressure — a bandit. He had never felt this fear, yet he had never felt this exultation.

The stairs came to an end, a doorway approached; he went in and listened to regular breathing. His feet were economical of steps and his body swayed sometimes at stretching as he felt over the bureau, pocketing all articles which held promise — he could not have enumerated them ten seconds afterwards. He felt on a chair for possible trousers, found soft garments, women's lingerie. The corners of his mouth smiled mechanically.

Another room . . . the same breathing, enlivened by one ghastly snort that sent his heart again on its tour of his breast. Round object — watch; chain; roll of bills; stick-pins; two rings — he remembered that he had got rings from the other bureau. He started out, winced as a faint glow flashed in front of him, facing him. God! — it was the glow of his own wrist-watch on his outstretched arm.

Down the stairs. He skipped two creaking steps but found another. He was all right now, practically safe; as he neared the bottom he felt a slight boredom. He reached the dining room — considered the silver — again decided against it.

Back in his room at the boarding house he examined the additions to his personal property:

Sixty-five dollars in bills.

A platinum ring with three medium diamonds, worth, probably, about seven

hundred dollars. Diamonds were going up.

A cheap gold-plated ring with the initials O. S. and the date inside — '03 — probably a class ring from school. Worth a few dollars. Unsalable.

A red cloth case containing a set of false teeth.

A silver watch.

A gold chain worth more than the watch.

An empty ring box.

A little ivory Chinese god — probably a desk ornament.

A dollar and sixty-two cents in small change.

He put the money under his pillow and the other things in the toe of an infantry boot, stuffing a stocking in on top of them. Then for two hours his mind raced like a high power engine here and there through his life, past and future, through fear and laughter. With a vague, inopportune wish that he were married he fell into a deep sleep about half past five.

VI

THOUGH the newspaper account of the burglary failed to mention the false teeth, they worried him considerably. The picture of a human waking in the cool dawn and groping for them in vain, of a soft, toothless breakfast, of a strange, hollow, lisping voice calling the police station, of weary, dispirited visits to the dentist, roused a great fatherly pity in him.

Trying to ascertain whether they belonged to a man or a woman he took them carefully out of the case and held them up near his mouth. He moved his own jaws experimentally; he measured with his fingers; but he failed to decide: they might belong either to a large-mouthed woman or a small-mouthed man.

On a warm impulse he wrapped them in brown paper from the bottom of his army trunk, and printed FALSE TEETH on the package in clumsy pencil letters. Then, the next night, he walked down Philmore Street, and

shied the package onto the lawn so that it would be near the door. Next day the paper announced that the police had a clue — they knew that the burglar was in town. However, they didn't mention what the clue was.

VII

AT the end of a month "Burglar Bill of the Silver District" was the nurse-girl's standby for frightening children. Five burglaries were attributed to him but though Dalrymple had only committed three he considered that majority had it and appropriated the title to himself. He had once been seen — "a large bloated creature with the meanest face you ever laid eyes on." Mrs. Henry Coleman awaking at two o'clock, at the beam of an electric torch flashed in her eye, could not have been expected to recognize Bryan Dalrymple at whom she had waved flags last fourth of July and whom she had described as "not at all the dare-devil type, do you think?"

When Dalrymple kept his imagination at white heat he managed to glorify his own attitude, his emancipation from petty scruples and remorse — but let him once allow his thought to rove unarmoured, great unexpected horrors and depressions would overtake him. Then for reassurance he had to go back to think out the whole thing over again. He found that it was on the whole better to give up considering himself as a rebel. It was more consoling to think of everyone else as a fool.

His attitude toward Mr. Macy underwent a change. He no longer felt a dim animosity and inferiority in his presence. As his fourth month in the store ended he found himself regarding his employer in a manner that was almost fraternal. He had a vague but very assured conviction that Mr. Macy's innermost soul would have abetted and approved. He no longer worried about his future. He had the intention of accumulating several thousand dollars and then clearing out —

going east, back to France, down to South America. Half a dozen times in the last two months he had been about to stop work, but a fear of attracting attention to his being in funds prevented him. So he worked on, no longer in listlessness, but with contemptuous amusement.

VIII

THEN with astounding suddenness something happened that changed his plans and put an end to his burglaries.

Mr. Macy sent for him one afternoon and with a great show of jovial mystery asked him if he had an engagement that night. If he hadn't would he please call on Mr. Alfred J. Fraser at eight o'clock. Dalrymple's wonder was mingled with uncertainty. He debated with himself whether it were not his cue to take the first train out of town. But an hour's consideration decided him that his fears were unfounded and at eight o'clock he arrived at the big Fraser house in Philmore Avenue.

Mr. Fraser was commonly supposed to be the biggest political influence in the city. His brother was Senator Fraser, his son-in-law was Congressman Demming, and his influence, though not wielded in such a way as to make him an objectionable boss, was strong nevertheless.

He had a great, huge face, deep-set eyes and a barn-door of an upper lip, the melange approaching a worthy climax in a long professional jaw.

During his conversation with Dalrymple his expression kept starting toward a smile, reached a cheerful optimism and then receded back to imperturbability.

"How do you, sir" he said, holding out his hand. "Sit down. I suppose you're wondering why I wanted you. Sit down."

Dalrymple sat down.

"Mr. Dalrymple, how old are you?"

"I'm twenty-three."

"You're young. But that doesn't mean you're foolish. Mr. Dalrymple,

what I've got to say won't take long. I'm going to make you a proposition. To begin at the beginning I've been watching you ever since last Fourth of July when you made that speech in response to the loving cup."

Dalrymple murmured disparagingly, but Fraser waved him to silence.

"It was a speech I've remembered. It was a brainy speech, straight from the shoulder and it got to everybody in that crowd. I know. I've watched crowds for years." He cleared his throat, as if tempted to digress on his knowledge of crowds — then continued. "But, Mr. Dalrymple, I've seen too many young men who promised brilliantly go to pieces, fail through want of steadiness, too many high power ideas, and not enough willingness to work. So I waited. I wanted to see what you'd do. I wanted to see if you'd go to work, and if you'd stick to what you started."

Dalrymple felt a glow settle over him.

"So," continued Fraser, "when Theron Macy told me you'd started down at his place I kept watching you and I followed your record through him. The first month I was afraid for awhile. He told me you were getting restless, too good for your job, hinting around for a raise —"

Dalrymple started.

"—but he said after that you evidently made up your mind to shut up and stick to it. That's the stuff I like in a young man! That's the stuff that wins out. And don't think I don't understand. I know how much harder it was for you, after all that silly flattery a lot of old women had been giving you. I know what a fight it must have been —"

Dalrymple's face was burning brightly. He felt young and strangely ingenuous.

"Dalrymple, you've got brains and you've got the stuff in you — and that's what I want. I'm going to put you into the State Senate."

"The *what*?"

"The State Senate. We want a

young man who has got brains, but is solid and not a loafer. And when I say State Senate I don't stop there. We're up against it here, Dalrymple. We've got to get some young men into politics — you know the old blood that's been running on the party ticket year in and year out."

Dalrymple licked his lips.

"You'll run me for the State Senate?"

"I'll *put* you in the State Senate."

Mr. Fraser's expression had now reached the point nearest a smile and Dalrymple in a happy frivolity felt himself urging it mentally on — but it stopped, locked and slid from him. The barn-door and the law were separated by a line straight as a nail. Dalrymple remembered with an effort that it was a mouth, and talked to it.

"But I'm through" he said. "My notoriety's dead. People are fed up with me."

"Those things," answered Mr. Fraser, "are mechanical. Linotype is a rescuator of reputations. Wait till you see the Herald beginning next week — that is if you're with us — that is," and his voice hardened slightly, "if you haven't got too many ideas yourself about how things ought to be run."

"No," said Dalrymple, looking him frankly in the eyes. "You'll have to give me a lot of advice at first."

"Very well. I'll take care of your reputation then. Just keep yourself on the right side of the fence."

Dalrymple started at this repetition of a phrase he had thought of so much

lately. There was a sudden ring at the doorbell.

"That's Macy now," observed Fraser rising. "I'll go let him in. The servants have gone to bed."

He left Dalrymple there in a dream. The world was opening up suddenly — The State Senate, the United States Senate — so life was this after all — cutting corners — cutting corners — common sense, that was the rule. No more foolish risks now unless necessity called — but it was being hard that counted — Never to let remorse or self reproach lose him a night's sleep — let his life be a sword of courage — there was no payment — all that was drivel — drivel. He sprang to his feet with clenched hands in a sort of triumph.

"Well, Bryan," said Mr. Macy stepping through the portières.

The two older men smiled their half smiles at him.

"Well, Bryan," said Mr. Macy again. Dalrymple smiled also.

"How do, Mr. Macy."

He wondered if some telepathy between them had made this new appreciation possible — some invisible realization.

Mr. Macy held out his hand.

"I'm glad we're to be associated in this scheme — I've been for you all along — especially lately. I'm glad we're to be on the same side of the fence."

"I want to thank you, sir," said Dalrymple simply. He felt a whimsical moisture gathering back of his eyes.



A WOMAN advances to her first kiss with halting footsteps. Thereafter she uses seven-league boots.



OF all the ways of provoking doubt, the surest is to agree too readily.



The Last Love

By John C. Cavendish

I

ROUX beckoned us to the veranda railing, and, leaning against a column crowned with Ionic volutes, he pointed off through the woods. The trees concealed the bulk of the structure, but we could make out the tiled roof and the gables of that sinister house.

We stared at it earnestly, profoundly interested, knowing it to be the place where Rolf Jesty had spent his last days. The memory of that man fascinated the imaginations of all of us.

In a true sense he had been an international character, so much a cosmopolite that his origin has been lost sight of. An American? Perhaps. No one had ever thought to label him. It was impossible to fix a nationality upon his unique and strangely dominating personality.

Even the memoirs of Madame Bourrell, intimate as they were—and frequently uncomfortably frank—had not served to do more than throw a dubious light upon his character. The memory of her months with Jesty had been too much for her. She sentimentalized over her recollections. But one thing she revealed; he had dominated her as thoroughly as he had dominated all others.

"Tomorrow," said Roux, "if any of you fellows intend to get up in the morning, I'll drive you over to see that house; I can even take you through it. The keys have been left with me. No doubt it will surprise you. Or will it be what you expected?"

We sought chairs on the veranda. Roux would surely tell us everything.

Without the expectation of his revelation he could have persuaded few of us to leave the city; certainly I would never have come by the simple bait of his hospitality. It was our mutual interest in Jesty that gathered us there.

Now Roux, disdaining a chair, seated himself on the railing and ran his fingers through his picturesquely disordered hair.

"Yes, it will surprise you," he went on, "because it shows so little the effect of that curious girl. There's scarcely a reminiscence of her in the house, the chairs, the pictures, the rugs, the books, even that elaborate garden. Yet he had it built for her, he brought all those things out here for her. The last love of Rolf Jesty! And she wasn't without her own personality, either . . ."

A voice came out from one of the wicker chairs.

"How did she impress you, Roux—I mean when you first saw her?"

He looked at his questioner intently, with the expression of one who recalls significant images from days that have spent their hours.

"As a tantalizing mood—as almost the symbol of a mood," he said. "Yes, she had a separate personality of her own. It's my conviction that is the key of the tragedy. Jesty never discovered it. He imposed his own personality as ruthlessly as he was used to. It may have been she was brooding upon that when I first saw her.

"It was in those woods you were looking through a moment ago. Just about noon. Not more than two weeks after she and Jesty had come out here. Up until that time I had seen nothing of him at all. Of course you must re-

member that prior to his living here, there had been no sort of intimacy between us. In that affair in Chile, whilst I was still with our legation, I had been able to do him a few favours. Perhaps I had talked with him as long as half an hour, if you'd lump all our conversations into one.

"She was standing quite idly, near a slender poplar tree. It was the proper setting for her—a young, slender thing herself. I guessed her identity at once—the surprising girl Jesty had married."

"Married?"

Roux glanced in the direction of the incredulous one among us.

"You doubt that part of the story?" he asked. "Yet it's true. Jesty made no secret of having married her. It was easily verified. People simply chose not to believe it, that's all. They imagined it wasn't in keeping with his character. As a matter of fact, it was exactly in keeping. Even Jesty must have had some secret premonition that he wouldn't last forever, that he was growing older. I am convinced that he believed himself old enough to indulge that last adventure."

"Well, as I say, she was standing near that slender tree with no purpose at all. I mean, no physical purpose. A mood doesn't need a physical purpose. At that moment she was expressing a mood."

"She raised her eyes and looked at me, a full gaze with no surprise. Yet her eyes still retained the expression of brooding that found, moreover, a more general outlet, that seemed to proceed from her entire figure, from the lax droop of her sloping shoulders, the flexion of her arms and idle hands, from even the slight backward wave of her black hair. I knew who she was at once, and I smiled at her."

"We are neighbors, I believe," I said. "To a certain extent I'm not an entire stranger either. You'll find that Mr. Jesty probably remembers me—we met some years ago. I've been waiting until you were more settled to call."

"She continued to look at me, with-

out any curiosity, without any evidence of interest. It seemed impossible for her to come out of her preoccupation. She said nothing, acknowledging my words with only the slightest nod of her head, up and down once or twice and then relapsing into motionless languor."

"But this gave me no feeling of embarrassment. Curiously enough, you never felt embarrassed with her. She was always too remote and therefore too impersonal."

"I took the opportunity then to scrutinize her face, which was certainly not a usual one. Her most striking feature was the arched line of her brows—two swift black brush-strokes, rising up obliquely from the slender bridge of her nose. The eyes below were large, but the lids drooped over them languorously, half concealing the greenish brown pupils. This was not a gentle face, although the lips were quite full and composed. It was a significant countenance, significant of some inner qualities, a fervour, an expectation, or even a disappointment, that were not readily comprehended. She was the next to speak, surprising me with a sudden question."

"Where do you live?" she asked.

"Her voice was a little unsympathetic, a little harsh, although the tone was full enough and round enough."

"I pointed through the trees."

"You can make out a little of the house from here. Not far."

"She followed my pointing finger with a brief, indifferent glance, and then questioned me again."

"How did you know me?" she asked.

"I smiled a little."

"There are not so many people in this region. We recognize a stranger immediately. Of course, you might have been any stranger, but there was something that suggested Mr. Jesty at once . . ."

"She astonished me by contracting her arched brows into an instant frown. Her lips narrowed somewhat. I felt uncomfortable; in some way I had

managed to displease her. This seemed strange because, quickly recalling my words, I could perceive nothing offensive in them.

"Have I begun to *look* like him?" she asked.

"The subdued vehemence of her query, the stress she put upon the syllables, astonished me.

"But I vaguely understood; her sentence brought a measure of revelation. It seems I almost lost my aplomb, inferences crowded into my perceptions so swiftly. No doubt my eyes widened considerably, but she did not notice. She began to pull idly at the leaves of the underbrush; a moment later she took a step away from me.

"Come and see us, if you want to," she said.

I watched her move away slowly, with her gliding walk, that made very little sound in the leaves and moss.

"So there was an antagonism! That was plain enough. And to a measure, probably not very full in that instant, I comprehended its nature.

"Think what a dominant man this Jesty was! Dominant without words, subtly so, dominant by the sheer strength of his personality. You met him, he overwhelmed you, provided you had intelligence enough to feel him. You were at a disadvantage, you felt belittled.

"And then there was the girl's personality. Jesty was a very perceiving man and no one would deny that he was clever enough to make sharp distinctions between different people. Yet the force of the man, the domination of the man, never achieved any distinctions. I knew at once that he was approaching this woman with his unvaried assurance of ascendancy. She was to be molded to him, to his wishes, to his aims, to his unspoken purposes. I stood there in the woods, staring after her with a vibrant, profound interest. Suppose she were in rebellion!"

Roux shifted his seat on the railing and stared at us all with an expression of exultation, as if that memory of his

discovery still retained something of its power to thrill his satisfied curiosity.

"All you fellows," he went on, "recall some of the circumstances of Jesty's meeting with the girl and some of the circumstances that led up to his marriage. Just bring back those recollections in a little more detail.

"You remember of course that curious Jarman woman—the only woman, I really believe, who ever received any considerable part of Jesty's confidences—and incidentally the only woman who seemed to preserve, successfully, all of her own personality in the face of that man's prevailing character. They must have known each other for years. Whenever he arrived in New York, he was certain to go and see her. You would observe them in some restaurant together, talking very amicably; the old lady would shake her finger admonishingly at Jesty and he tolerated that mannerism like a subdued schoolboy. It was just about two years ago now that Jesty met the girl in the Jarman woman's home . . .

"It was his first visit after a prolonged absence, his first visit since the South American affair where I had the . . . the . . . shall I say good luck? . . . to meet him. He never wrote letters. No doubt he considered words inadequate. He came in very unexpectedly, entered the living room, and found Mrs. Jarman and the girl together.

"Of course she gave him a cordial greeting and then introduced Estelle.

"My niece," she said.

"He bowed over the girl's hand; she did not smile; she met his gaze with a searching expression and the greenish glints of those brown eyes must have been a little unfathomable.

"They all took chairs and the two friends began to talk; the girl contributed nothing to their conversation. She sat in silence, looking from one to the other, but more often she paid no attention to either of them.

"On that first meeting, I am certain, she exhibited her customary attitude of

self-sufficient aloofness. It was as if some inner drama absorbed all that girl's attention, making her indifferent to the externals of her environment. She could be startlingly immobile.

"Afterward, when they were alone, Jesty questioned the old lady.

"I never knew you had a niece," he said.

"You've heard me speak of my sister?" she questioned.

"Yes—she lives in France?"

"She did . . ."

"He raised his brows a little in understanding.

"So far as I know," said Mrs. Jarman, 'she's dead. We had no communication for years—a difference of temperament. I never saw this girl before she came here. Perhaps she's not my niece at all—but then, I have no especial reason to doubt her. It doesn't matter anyway. A very curious girl. One that you're going to stay away from.'

"It was a sort of a threat, and it was backed up by the Jarman woman's determined vigilance.

"Not that Jesty displayed any eagerness to become intimate with Estelle. He seemed quite indifferent to her. For the next six months they never had five minutes conversation alone together. Was Mrs. Jarman trying to protect the girl?—or was she, with a singularly subtle insight, a foreseeing intuition, endeavouring to shield Jesty himself?

"That last hypothesis seems a little ludicrous, but you can't be sure. She was a penetrating woman, and she must have understood the girl's character fairly well.

"But her sudden death altered the situation. The girl continued to live in the same house—all the old lady's property went to her. Now you began to see Estelle and Jesty together.

"At first it was only an occasional glimpse as they rode about in his car. Then they appeared in restaurants, the theaters, the opera.

"They were never an ordinary look-

ing pair. She seemed frail at the side of Jesty until you scrutinized her more particularly and then a certain strength of her own was revealed. It was the strength of silence, the power of that strange, inner absorption.

"Only occasionally, and then solely in the early days of their companionship, would you find her regarding that remarkable man as a being with whom she had any intimate concern.

"Her look then—those occasional looks—were arresting enough, however; I am sure of that. The large eyes would widen, the pale face would flush a little and her features would assume a rapt significance, as if she contemplated a beloved vision. How incredibly romantic she was! How appalling was her simplicity, a simplicity of wanting that made her unique and rare! Jesty never understood . . .

"But her silences, her unfathomed brooding, her uncomprehended aloofness determined his complete interest. He wanted her. That was enough for him; it sufficed, without any formality of her own consent.

"There was only one difficulty. Her lack of the usual eagerness, the ordinary response, puzzled him in the matter of her possession. No doubt, aside from the allure of a new experience, we discover here his reason for marrying her. It was the only way open; it was a single, conclusive act that would assert his right and his dominance."

II

Roux paused once more and drew in a deep breath.

"I'm giving you this," he said, "in a much more connected manner than I was able to gather it. A large part of what I have said is constructed from inferences, from snatches of words—but reliable enough—coming to me after they moved out here.

"My curiosity was large enough to lead me to my first call shortly after I had met Estelle in the woods. I ascended the steps of their veranda

with some uncertainty as to my reception.

"A man-servant took me into the hall—a white hall with a turning flight of stairs going up in back; white balustrades and gold figures; somewhat glaring, very decorative, and perhaps the only part of that house that pleased the girl or was in consonance with her individuality.

"Jesty himself suddenly appeared through the curtains of the living room at the side. He recognized me at once, and it seemed that Estelle had told him of meeting me.

"He was unexpectedly cordial; he shook hands warmly.

"'Come in here,' he said. 'We usually sit in here.'

"I preceded him through the clinging silk of the curtains and there was the girl, languorous in a deep chair, heavy-lidded, and indifferent. She scarcely rose to greet me. She looked extraordinarily exotic in the curious setting of that room.

"A most inappropriate room—for her. Imagine her spending hours with Jesty among all those weapons, to which she was utterly indifferent. He had every kind of firearm imaginable arranged around the walls of that apartment. The bulk of his collection, in fact: old Spanish pistols with ornate silver handles, Chaffe, Berdan, Chassepot breach loaders, the oldest weapons and the newest, and all of them, wherever possible, charged and ready to shoot. Picture Jesty creating a room like that in the house he built, ostensibly, for her!

"During my short visit the girl practically ignored me. Not that it was not an ignoring of a character that could offend anyone of my sort. It was a . . . a—total abstraction. She ignored Jesty quite as much. But he was entirely calm. He took her for granted, took her interest for granted, took her acquiescence for granted—and even, I suppose, her love.

"He spoke to me about his plans.

"'I don't know how long we'll stay here,' he said. 'No doubt I'll get tired

of this soon enough. That means we'll doubtless go to Europe. Wherever I decide.'

"'—and Mrs. Jesty,' I added, rather rashly.

"He stared a moment as if my words had been uttered in an unknown and uncomprehended tongue.

"'Oh . . . yes,' he murmured, finally.

"I was glad to get out of that atmosphere. It was too full of uncomfortable suggestion, of a complex suggestion that eluded my understanding. That room gave one the unaccountable impression of being highly charged; it produced upon me the effect you might expect, the emotional response you might predict for yourself, were you to be given an infernal machine to take apart and examine.

"But going down the steps from the house, I was paradoxically sorry to have left. The pair interested me beyond decent reason. And I began to see Jesty a little more closely, and found myself admiring him.

"What a colossal assurance resided in that man! He revealed no doubts about his strange companion; it was obvious that he was convinced of her plasticity, of his ability to mould her to his aims, to his purposes, to his plans—whatever they were. What did Jesty want with her anyway?

"Looking back, it seems to me now that the man was exhibiting the initial declination of his powers, a slight foreshadowing of approaching age. I suspect now that he had no well-defined hopes in her, but approached her because of a habit, his habit of dominating women. He saw her; she piqued him; and he could not resist.

"At this time I was considerably at a loss how to proceed. There was no good reason for making another call. They did not return my call. And yet, I wanted to see them very much indeed. As it happened, Estelle herself came to me.

"It was early one morning; I had walked out on the porch here before breakfast.

"Across the lawn, where you see that bed of yellow gardenias, I saw her stooping. She had a flower cupped in her slender hands and was inhaling the fragrance of it in deep breaths. Half her face was turned to my scrutiny and in her unawareness of observation her countenance assumed a revealing form that startled me like a momentous discovery.

"She seemed, in that trivial act of smelling a flower, to achieve an expression of profound passion, of pent emotion that flowed from her abundantly, like a visible outpouring. And with this there was commingled a wanting, no less exuberant, but touching, but pathetic.

"A risky determination came into my mind.

"I crossed the veranda and ran down the steps. She did not notice me until I was almost upon her.

"She heard my step at last and straightened up suddenly; the expression of her face underwent a swift change.

"It was as if she had achieved a palpable withdrawal of all those emotions that a moment before had overlaid her face like a visible aura. Her parted lips closed, without compression, but with that faintly drooping, almost sullen line so common to their ordinary aspect.

"'Excuse me,' she murmured.

"'You don't have to be excused,' I said. 'You're welcome here any time you want to come. I'm glad you like those flowers. I don't pay much attention to them myself. But if you want some of them, I'll dig up a few of the plants and bring them over to you.'

"'Yes, I like them,' she said.

"It was evident that she did not intend to be any more cordial, or any more communicative than before. I renewed my determination. I looked at her very earnestly.

"'You said something to me,' I told her, 'that first day I met you in the woods, that greatly aroused my interest. It was unexpected, and its inferences have almost possessed me. To

be plain, it was the last sentence you found time to say to me. You asked me, very vehemently, and very curiously: 'Have I begun to look like him.'"

"There was the dawn of the faintest surprise on her face, expressed in a slight widening of her drooping lids, an almost immeasurable trivial rise of her arched, jet brows. Her slim body seemed to sway forward a trifle.

"Her eyes met my own; her lips parted.

"'Why are you interested in me?' she asked.

"The question was profoundly satisfying. Then I had made some progress! She was beginning to talk!

"'Good,' I exclaimed. 'Then you know that I am interested. Yes, extremely. I'm interested in both of you. I haven't any excuse for my curiosity either, except that a sufficient provocation will arouse the most incurious one. You are provoking . . .'

"She dropped her eyes. Watching her face with the most intimate examination, I thought the corners of her lips turned up into the ghost of a smile.

"'A moment ago I came out and caught you . . .'

"At these words she stiffened a little; the vaporous smile vanished.

"'What do you mean?'

"'I couldn't help it,' I said, 'and I must be forgiven. I didn't know you were here. I saw you bending over those flowers, caressing them in fact, and there was an expression on your face that was a revelation to me—'

"I was paused by the startling, the sudden opening of her arresting eyes.

"'No doubt you've found out something that *he* never will,' she said. 'Well—what did *he* want with me? Why did he take me? *An old man—just like you . . .*'

"It will be difficult for you fellows to imagine the profundity of scorn that her inflection made out of that word old! Jesty an old man! Like me!

"A real sympathy for the man came to me in those seconds. This was his last woman and with his last woman he

suffered his first disaster. He had no magic for her, and he was powerless to play, with those fingers that had in former years touched the chords of response so often, upon this strange, young instrument.

"She had dropped her face again and the old half-sullen withdrawal lay over her features like an impermeable veil.

"There is no advice I can give to you," I said.

"Of course there isn't."

"The response was immediate. She retained her immobility for a moment and then turned to go.

"I'll take some of these plants if you have time to bring them over," she said.

"This afternoon," I called after her.

"She did not answer me, she did not acknowledge my words.

"I watched her as she crossed the lawn, languorous in her progress and, like a revelation, it appeared to me, extraordinarily and fatally romantic!

III

"THE conviction of her romantic simplicity came to me, as I have said, as a revelation. And it was a conviction. However elusive she might be in the minutiae of her character, now, she was fundamentally comprehended. Her brooding hours, her inner absorption—the astounding preoccupation with her visions of romance!

"In the passionate simplicity of her wanting, that made her above all else unique, what gothic dreams of astounding glamour she must have created! Ah, the tragic dreams of youth; the expectancy; the prospect of glamour—and the moving and pathetic certainty of unfulfilment! She went away across that lawn like an impossible wraith, making a demand upon life too incredible for the terms of actuality.

"That afternoon I took the plants over to her. She met me in her customary way; she was almost sullen in the few words she spoke. Why not? What had I to give her—or *Jesty*, who was also present?

"Jesty stood near her while we talked

together. Once during the brief conversation, he touched her on the arm. At that moment my eyes happened to rest on her face.

"Across the indifference and abstraction of her features there came something else, a stirring and profound emotion whose startling significance was made known to me in those revealing instants. It was a coming out of her abstraction; it was a direct response to Jesty.

"It was then that I had my first intimation of a fear for him. Plainly, she had passed out of the quiescent condition of ignoring him. His touch moved her; his nearness set her into vibration. And—it was the response of a developing hate . . ."

Roux paused again, but only for an instant. He saw that we were all attending him. He retained his same intent attitude on the porch rail, but bent a little closer to our figures in the wicker chairs.

"The last day," he said, "presents the clearest picture of all. I suppose I forced myself upon those people abominably—still, Jesty never complained. The girl was too remote from me to care. But there are certain dramas that must be watched, certain curiosities too strong for the restraint of the customary proprieties.

My habit was to appear there several times a week. Usually in the afternoon. When we were not outdoors, we always met in that room full of guns, incongruous guns. Incongruous? Perhaps, for the inscrutable purpose of life, not so incongruous . . .

"On this final afternoon we had talked as usual in the room that held Jesty's grim collection. Estelle was in an unusual mood. More than ordinarily talkative. Indeed, she was almost vivacious—using her former aspects as the basis of comparison. She achieved the miracle of small talk. Her eyes were less drooping, her manner less in the condition of remote languor.

"When I arose to go, she stood up, too. Jesty, assured, sardonic, dominating, also came out of his chair and took

a position opposite her, across a little table that separated them. I saw her turn her face and rest her eyes upon his countenance.

"At that moment I had no opportunity for the analysis of her expression but one thing struck me forcibly: she seemed, in that instant itself, to have come to some sort of a determination. As I left the room, her lips were faintly compressed and her eyes were extraordinarily large.

"I went out through the hall and descended the steps from the porch leisurely enough. I continued toward the woods, that separate the two houses. I had gone fifty yards, perhaps, when I heard the shot.

"I knew it came from the house. More than that, I knew it came from that room. An understanding that refused to articulate itself into comprehensible words flashed into my mind.

"I stopped dead still—but only for a moment.

"Turning then, I ran back toward the house.

"The room was full of a pungent smoke. Jesty was lying face up on the floor and the little table, overturned, one of the legs snapped in two, half concealed his body.

"Estelle stood motionless near the wall, almost in the exact spot where I had left her a moment before. I remembered now that she had only to reach up in order to remove the silver-handled pistol from its hook.

"And when I came in our eyes met in the fog that lay over the sinister room. They met in an instant of complete comprehension; she knew that I understood. She did not utter a word; there was no sound in the room.

"What may astonish you fellows is that I myself had no surprise, that all this seemed the inevitable ending, the terribly proper conclusion. What else was to be expected from that silent, passionate girl? Hadn't Jesty to pay—in the reasoning of her astounding romantic simplicity—for the theft of her life, for the taking of her from any fulfilment of her dreams, of her gothic dreams, powerless to give a single instant of thrill to the desires of her ardent youth? Her desires . . . that no one could fulfill . . ."

IV

"But tell us, Roux, how in the world was she acquitted?"

"At the trial? A reasonable enough question. But she was. The defence was that he had attacked her—perfectly preposterous of course. No evidence of that. She didn't even go on the stand. But what other outcome would you expect from a jury of these parts? Jesty had utterly ignored all these people. They felt their inferiority, too. That means that they were envious—always the result of a conviction of inferiority. These yokels were not going to do any justice for that dead man."

"And where is she?" was the question.

"I don't know," said Roux. "Disappeared after the trial. You might have asked me what she is doing—I could have answered that. Evolving her absurd and tragic dreams, of course, I don't believe you sense the immeasurable romanticism of that girl. A woman of her sort will always dream. It is, in a way of speaking, her doom."



A WOMAN always likes to receive the announcement of an engagement. It gives her a chance to quarrel with the bride-elect, and so avoid buying a wedding present.

Monna

An Unfinished Portrait

By F. P. Delgado

NOTWITHSTANDING other and perhaps more personal considerations that her memory so often hauntingly evokes, she is associated very largely in my mind with a question of environment, specifically so because the city in which it was my privilege to know her did not seem the locality to which she really belonged and where one instinctively would seek to find her.

I met her in Paris, where she was studying art and where, concerned in other seemingly more important interests, I was indifferently conscious of her gracious presence. Later on, in Florence, the city of her birth, I was all too keenly aware of her absence and of my former insensibility. And it is in this endeavour constantly to visualize her, not where she was but where she ought to have been, that her portrait is always in a state of progression, and yet—in the very nature of things—never finally achieved.

The memory is perhaps both psychological and symbolic. The psychology is concerned with the unusual influence of propinquity, the careless indifference when there was occasion to be otherwise, the realization and the regret when the same opportunity later so devoutly desired was no longer present. And the symbolism lies in the subtle knowledge that the Tuscan city asleep on the Arno lacked by reason of her absence the one thing that prevented the fulfillment and completion of its beauty, that it would always slumber on unless she to whom it had given part of its soul in birth

should return and awaken it into the larger joyousness of the day.

Her name of Monna, singularly odd yet attractive, seemed peculiarly appropriate. I am unaware of its significance, other than she rejoiced in it and it in her. Browning was once tempted to learn a certain melodious language on account of a rose with its soft, meandering Spanish name.

Yet I had a far better incentive to study Italian. But I have made no progress in a speech both half awake and half asleep. Perhaps it is because I have been too busy seeking to paint a portrait to take the necessary time to study the rippling syllable with which its title should be suitably fixed.

Although I met and knew her in Paris, I saw her but rarely there, not over a dozen times at the most, and never alone. I can recall having tea with her in her apartments in the Rue de l'Université, at the Lyceum Club and at the villa of the Princess M. at St. Cloud. We met elsewhere as well—in the studio of Mme. Mérignac, the most distinguished of women medallists in France; at the Musée de Balzac; and once at a concert to hear a celebrated Russian pianist interpret Chopin.

Perhaps among the few rare occasions that it was my privilege to be in her society, the one that lurks most vividly in my memory was a certain evening in the house of a mutual friend in the Rue de Vaugirard.

A few guests had been invited to hear one of the younger French poets, one of the leaders of *La Poétique* move-

ment, recite his verses. She arrived somewhat late, and I remember even now the incidents of her entrance as she crossed the threshold of the *salon*, dressed simply yet beautifully in black, bare of arms and throat, a slight, girlish hesitancy in her graceful movements, yet withal a certain poise, a certain sureness, a tacit recognition of the homage due a fine tradition.

She was very beautiful that night. To say how or why would be superfluous, for such considerations at best are only matters of relativity. Yet the blue-gray eyes with their eager, questioning regard, the mass of blonde hair tastefully and simply arranged, the fine and delicate contour of the throat and shoulders, the youth and cadence of her figure, made a picture ineffably sweet and unforgettable.

It was my pleasure to sit beside her during the all too fleeting hours of that memorable evening. In comparison everything else sank into insignificance. I cannot even recall the nature of the verses recited by the poet. They seemed so artificial in contrast to what was so wonderfully real.

I tried to question her concerning her art work and studies, but she was very reticent in speaking of her aspirations and ambitions—a few flashing and illuminating bits of criticism on the methods of the different schools, a casual reference or two concerning her classes and *croquis* and that was all.

Yet she was quite interested in my own work, loath as I was to tell her about it. She was curious about life, a fine and sane curiosity. Intuitively she arrived at its conclusions by an unerring yet simple knowledge of its threads. It is a rare art that few possess—the embroidery of life, spun and fashioned by a sure selection of its many varied weaves.

We conversed in English, which she spoke perfectly. She had lived in England and she loved it, especially the counties of Suffolk and Surrey and the allurement of the English downs.

Then we spoke of the student life of Paris, the happy and often irresponsible

career of those who are attracted to the great city like moth to a flame. She knew nothing of the obvious side of that life. It did not appeal to her. I doubt if she had ever set foot in Lavenue's, the gay resort so dear to the hearts of the art students of the Montparnasse quarter. She belonged rather to that army of serious, quiet workers whose numbers are greater than the casual visitor to Paris would ever suspect. For life there does not always mean the laughter and the lights of Bohemia. They are part of it, it is true, but only a small part. Thus she pursued her daily tasks, happy in her work, eager in the study and contemplation of the wonderful things that lay ready at her hand, with a devotion to a noble ideal, and with a faith serene and confident in the morrow.

Thus I knew her, casually and not intimately, and I did not realize the significance of it all. Happiness often assumes many strange disguises, passes us unawares in the night season. Perhaps it is because we sometimes lack the vision to penetrate beyond the veil and we see only when it is too late.

II

AND yet in a strange and subtle way I began to know her intimately when later I was in Florence and she was absent still in France. Many months, too, had elapsed. And I began to interpret the city by reason of her, to regard it in terms of personality.

There was a reciprocal relationship also. The city enabled me really to understand her. It has been very truly said that the excess of beauty of the Tuscan city causes a kind of intoxication that inhibits achievement. I felt that very keenly. One might dream there eternally. I doubt very much if a great thing could ever be accomplished there. In the past it was different.

During the Renaissance it was a city of energy, where countless forces converged, intellectual and otherwise. Today there remains only the dream. And while it is true that every great thing

has a vision somewhere back of it, it is also just as true that no dream can ever be realized unless it is built upon something tangible and real.

I felt that there could be no achievement there, either for the city or myself, while she was absent. So by a method of specious casuistry I began to visualize her, to give to the dream its reality, to awaken the great iron-barred Tuscan *palazzi* from their long and heavy slumber.

And the visualization of a fine memory was not difficult, because there were visible aids and silent testimony to it on every hand. I found it especially in the wonderful canvases of Botticelli, because, somehow, she seemed the real and tangible expression of what the great artist of the Renaissance had so truly glimpsed and anticipated. Perhaps it was because his Venuses and especially his Madonnas, so unusual in mediæval art, were blonde. What exalted and specific claim the brunette has to that subtle honour I am unaware. I know a certain blonde Madonna of Sassoferato in Rome that I would not exchange for all the dark daughters of Eve.

And the subtle relationship was not alone primarily concerned with colour that Botticelli's paintings brought her thus so vividly to mind. It was also because the haunting charm of his graceful women bore, like she, a look of silent inquiry on their eager faces. Their expression is that of the wistfulness of exiles, *deracinées*, as the French appropriately characterize it. And she, true to that same tradition, remained in Paris, in the Rue de l'Université, a far cry from all these Florentine fancies. I wonder sometimes if Botticelli did not dimly anticipate her in a dream, because he too was a visionary with all the alert sense of outward things.

And there was another sense of similarity besides that of art that made me think of her so often in this Old World city. It was concerned chiefly with nature and was largely pagan in character. Often I used to imagine that I would

come upon her somewhere by chance among the charming environs of the town, a wayside divinity met casually upon the high road or along the little byways, the spirit of the forest to be suddenly encountered amidst the perfect silence of its trees.

I felt this especially at Vallombrosa, among its orchards and its vineyards, up among the olive-clad heights of Fiesole, at Monte Ceceri with the wonder of the Val d'Arno asleep in the haze beneath, and perhaps best of all at Settignano with its tall and slender cypresses and the slow winding road that led down through a tangle of woods past the Castel di Poggio and the little church of Santa Maria a Vincigliata.

At every gap in the trees, at every purple shadow cast upon the hard, white road, I half expected to find her, a wood nymph, the incentive, no doubt, that once fleetingly caught in a beam of sunlight had prompted Sandro to paint her on the canvas, in order to fix there forever the dear image that he hoped some time to meet again.

Yet in the hush and silence of the forest there seemed ever an inexpressible wistfulness and longing, as though it too awaited, calmly and patiently, the return of the soul that had slipped away and whose memory lingered now only in the plaintive call of the nightingales or was revealed sometimes in the strange, fantastic shapes of the blue-black shadows of the cypresses.

And if she thus dwelt in the spirit of the woods that clustered the hills above the city, she seemed also to reside mysteriously in the presence of its roofs and spires—over the towers of the Duomo, the Campanile and of the Palazzo Vecchio, in the restful green of the Boboli Gardens, upon the Ponte Santa Trinita and the Ponte Vecchio beneath which the sluggish Arno creeps haltingly and peacefully to the sea.

And thus regarding the beauty and mysticism of it all, the crenelated piles and graceful towers over which her spirit seemed to brood, I thought of the chance meeting in Paris and what it had

meant in after days. At the time I regarded it only as a trifle, a Tuscan trifle, and life is full of such. It is only when trifles become tremendous, as they sometimes do, that their real significance becomes apparent.

I daresay to her this meeting meant no more than a brief and casual recognition on the highway of life, to be forgotten and put aside in the further experience of other and more definite things. But to me it meant and still means much more than that. That Lady Fortune who dwells at Actium and of whom Horace so often sang, rarely bestows the same gift twice. So I shall in all probability never meet her again. Yet the memory lives, and sometimes troubles. And I wish her always a life as bright and smiling as her own blue Tuscan skies.

Accordingly, it seems that I am always eternally seeking to paint her portrait, patiently and lovingly, and not in brilliant colours, for memory always portrays itself in faint and timid hues, with a feeling of softness and of atmosphere, a suggestion only of the great line. It is a labour of love without love's reward—line upon line, tint upon tint, a dim distance seen imperfectly through

falling rain. There is hesitation always as well, never that sureness were the model of today. And it is a hesitancy born of a certain fear, intangible and hardly capable of expression.

The fear lurks in the belief that I am painting yesterday's portrait only. Has she changed, and would she recognize her picture in the transition that time must have wrought in her? Has life, the greater artist, fashioned her in sharper relief, fantastic decoration possibly usurping the silver-gray background, the surprises of detail arrogating to themselves the impressionistic mass. In a word, is she different in life than on the canvas, or is she still the same and has life simply completed what I have timidly begun?

For life is like colour in one respect. It often retains its insistent sharpness, softened a little, perhaps, by time, yet with the underlying hues freshly and vividly retained. Some day I shall return to Florence, merely to see whether the terra-cotta medallions of della Robbia, set in the facade and between the colonnades of the Spedali degli Innocenti, or hanging on the walls of the Bargello, still hold their cool and brilliant blues.



Joy

By Jessie B. Rittenhouse

NOW I can sing of happy things
And let the sad world go its way,
Since you have spoken words that turn
The night to day.

Now I can sow beside all streams
And care not if another reap,
Since all that I would garner here
Is mine to keep.

Now I can scatter joy about
Like green young leaves that fall in spring,
Because the tree is all too rich
In bourgeoning!

Petit Pierre

By Henri Allorge

LE petit Pierre était un de ces enfants qui semblent maudits dès avant leur naissance.

Sa mère jouait, sans talent, sur une scène de troisième ou de quatrième ordre. C'était une femme qu'on méprisait, même dans le monde peu rigoriste des théâtres. Quant à son père, il n'en avait pas, étant le fils du hasard.

L'actrice avait accueilli sa naissance comme une catastrophe et lui gardait une haine que rien ne devait adoucir ; elle ne pouvait lui pardonner d'être venu au monde, bien malgré lui, pourtant.

Mis en nourrice chez des gens égoïstes et durs, il avait, par quelque mystère, persisté à vivre, sans savoir pourquoi ni comment, certes ; car la vie n'était pour lui, déjà, qu'une suite de souffrances. Il ne se rappelait, de cette époque sombre, que ses longues conversations avec le chien de garde qui lui léchait doucement les mains, en le regardant avec des yeux pleins d'une caresse humide, comme s'il eût été un grand frère qui ne parlât pas.

Plus tard, sa mère l'avait repris. Il n'en était pas plus heureux. Il restait le plus souvent, soit à la maison, soit chez une vieille voisine à laquelle sa mère le confiait lorsque la présence de l'enfant pouvait être gênante, ce qui arrivait souvent. Cette voisine avait pris Pierre en amabilité ; elle le soignait, le lavait, lui donnait à manger, ce que la mère oubliait parfois, et s'ingéniait à lui rendre l'existence moins triste.

Pierre l'aimait bien ; mais il sentait que l'affection d'une étrangère ne pouvait remplacer celle d'une mère.

Quelquefois, cependant, la sienne le faisait sortir ; elle l'emmenait le plus souvent au Luxembourg ou aux Tuileries. Elle l'habillait, ces jours-là, de

costumes de coupe prétentieuse et de couleurs voyantes, qu'il endossait sans joie ; il s'apercevait bien que sa mère ne faisait pas cela pour son plaisir à lui, et que les passants le regardaient avec plus de surprise que d'admiration. Quelques-uns même souriaient et avaient l'air de se moquer de lui ; d'autres semblaient le plaindre. Il était mal à l'aise dans ses beaux habits et aurait bien voulu les ôter.

Souvent il s'écartait de sa mère. Ce n'était pas difficile, elle faisait si peu attention à lui ; et pendant qu'elle causait en riant avec des messieurs très élégants, Pierre allait retrouver d'autres petits garçons.

— Est-ce que ta maman t'aime, disait-il à l'un d'eux.

— Oh ! oui, et papa aussi m'aime bien.

Pierre soupirait et réfléchissait. Qu'était-ce qu'un papa ? Il se le demandait en vain. Pourquoi n'en avait-il pas, lui ? Pourquoi semblait-on le repousser ? Car presque toujours quelqu'un accourait vivement et emmenait ses petits interlocuteurs, en les grondant.

Et, parfois, un enfant vêtu tout de noir lui répondait à voix basse des choses que de nouveau il ne comprenait pas, et qui l'attristaient, sans qu'il sût pourquoi :

— Mon papa est parti pour un grand voyage.

Pierre s'en allait, rêveur. Est-ce que son papa était aussi parti en voyage ? Pourquoi ne l'habillait-on pas aussi de noir, alors, au lieu de l'affubler de choses étranges qui le faisaient ressembler à une poupée ? Pourquoi ne lui parlait-on jamais de ce papa, qui l'eût peut-être aimé ? Demander des explications à sa mère ? Jamais il n'eût osé. Il at-

tendait d'être grand pour comprendre ces mystères. Mais une chose dont il était bien sûr, c'est qu'une mère doit aimer son petit garçon.

Un jour elle le conduisit dans une grande maison, qu'elle lui dit être son théâtre. Ce mot ne représentait rien à l'esprit de l'enfant. Il l'entendait souvent répéter, mais il en ignorait le sens. Il suivit sa mère docilement, le cœur gros, car elle lui avait enjoint durement de faire tout ce qu'on lui dirait, sans s'étonner et sans demander pourquoi.

Ils entrèrent dans un couloir étroit, sales et sombre, qu'éclairaient à peine des ampoules électriques usées. Pierre avait peur. Ils montèrent ensuite des escaliers interminables et noirs, qui touraient ou zigzaguaient sans cesse. Ils arrivèrent dans une petite chambre, où des gens les attendaient. Aux murs, Pierre remarqua des gravures et des portraits qui ressemblaient à sa mère, et qui pourtant paraissaient représenter une autre personne, car jamais l'enfant ne l'avait vue avec des robes ni avec des coiffures aussi riches et aussi extraordinaires. Elle était vêtue comme les fées que la vieille voisine lui faisait admirer en images.

On le prit soudain pour lui ôter ses habits et lui en mettre d'autres, qu'il jugea singuliers, mais beaux. Il était tout fier, car la femme qui l'habillait l'avait embrassé en lui disant qu'il était joli comme un chérubin. Il ne savait pas ce que c'était ; néanmoins le compliment lui avait fait plaisir et il était rouge de contentement.

Mais sa mère était venue le prendre ; elle aussi avait de magnifiques habits, des colliers éblouissants, un diadème. Elle le plaça dans un coin, en lui ordonnant de rester là jusqu'à ce qu'on vût le chercher. Puis elle disparut.

Cela dura longtemps. Pierre ne savait que devenir ; il entendait un bruit con-

fus de paroles, de plaintes et de cris, qui l'effrayaient. Des allées et venues secouaient sa torpeur, mais redoublaient son effarement et ses craintes.

Enfin, une femme, qui portait aussi un costume inusité, vint le prendre par la main et l'emmena presque sans transition devant une grande salle étincelante de lumière, de dorures et de cristaux. Il fut ébloui. Puis il vit qu'elle était pleine de beaux messieurs et de belles dames qui le regardaient, avec sympathie, à ce qu'il crut. Sa mère était là, et semblait l'attendre. Sans doute, c'était pour l'amuser qu'elle l'avait conduit dans cette belle maison ?

Et voici qu'elle l'embrassait bien fort, comme elle ne l'avait jamais embrassé, et qu'elle lui disait des choses très douces, avec une voix musicale comme un chant d'oiseau. Elle lui disait qu'il était son fils chéri, sa vie et son trésor, qu'elle n'avait rien de plus précieux que lui. Et voici qu'elle lui parlait de son papa, qu'elle paraissait aimer beaucoup.

Petit Pierre était ivre de surprise et de bonheur. Il allait dire à sa mère tout son ravissement, l'embrasser encore bien fort et bien longtemps, et lui demander de le mener bien vite voir son papa.

Mais à ce moment un grand rideau tomba devant lui. On l'emmena. Il entendit un fracas bizarre qui lui fit peur de nouveau. On eût dit que la maison s'écroulait. Enfin, sa mère revint. Il se précipita vers elle, avec, sur les lèvres, des mots d'amour et de caresses ; il lui tendait avidement ses petits bras en l'appelant :

— Maman ! Maman !

Mais elle le repoussa brutalement, sans voir ses yeux soudain remplis de grosses larmes, et cria en ricanant, de sa voix rude et méchante des autres jours :

— Non ! mais il croit que c'est arrivé ! Ce qu'il est embêtant, ce gosse-là !



The Five Hundred and First That

By George Jean Nathan

I

THERE will shortly be submitted to connoisseurs of art and letters an educational opusculé by the Professors Mencken and Nathan entitled "The American Credo: A Contribution Toward the Interpretation of the National Mind." In this work the talented gentlemen in question will endeavour to depict, through a compilation of the common articles of the popular faith, the American ganglionic nerve-cell, nerve-fibre, sustentacular and vascular tissue in action. It will be the effort to show that the national philosophy is a bloom whose roots, searched out to the nethermost fibril, are grounded in the perfectly serious, if apparently doodlish, convictions that one never sees a Frenchman drunk, all the souses whom one sees in Paris being Americans; that the Germans eat six regular meals a day, and between times stave off their appetite with numerous Schweitzer cheese sandwiches, liverwurst and beer; that David Belasco teaches his actresses how to express emotion by giving them black eyes and pulling them around the stage by the hair; that all Japanese butlers are lieutenants in the Japanese Navy, and that they read and copy all letters received by the folks they work for; that all negroes who show any intelligence whatever are actually two-thirds white, and the sons of United States Senators; that Italian children, immediately they leave the cradle, are sewed into their underclothes, and that they never get a bath thereafter until they are confirmed; that George M. Cohan

and Irving Berlin can only play the piano with one finger; that when a Chinese laundryman hands one a slip for one's laundry, the Chinese letters which he writes on the slip have nothing to do with the laundry, but are in reality a derogatory description of the owner; that Polish women are so little human that one of them can have a baby at 8 a. m. and cook her husband's dinner at noon; that an elephant has a wonderful memory, will after a lapse of twenty years recall a man who gave him a rotten peanut, and will soak him a crack with his trunk; that—

Well, some five hundred other such thats follow, though among them there is lacking one that might well have been included in the metaphysical synopsis. And this is that the theatrical taste of the Broadway first-night audience is on a par with that of a chiropodist and responsible for the generic affinity of the American drama to a dog show. It is perfectly true, of course, that there are regularly a number of persons in the Broadway first-night audience of an intellectual and social quality almost as intense as that of a first-class mule, but it is equally true that, despite the incorporation of this element into the first-night audience, this same first-night audience is on the whole as receptive, as generous and as percipient a theater audience as one may expect to find anywhere.

A theater audience, wherever one finds it, is at best an indifferent congress, since the theater, wherever one finds it, appeals at best to the first-rate second-raters of a nation's civilization, and on the average to a run of folk in-

finitely lower. If the New York first-night audience is no Académie Française, the Paris first-night audience—we have the best Parisians' word on it—isn't one either. And no one of us who has mingled as well among first-night audiences in Berlin, London and Madrid is under any illusion that the caucus of social pushers, "angels," actors, chronic boulevardiers, girl-chasers and theatrical agents who constitute the mass of such audiences is a diet of Corinthians. If the New York first-night gang hailed "Peg o' My Heart" a pearl without price, so did the London. If the New York first-nighters voted "Sherlock Holmes" a greater work than they voted Ibsen's "John Gabriel Borkman," so did the Paris. And if the New York first-nighters received "Alias Jimmy Valentine" as a gift straight from Heaven, so did the Berlin.

It is probable that the New York first-night audience, barring perhaps its newspaper reviewers, has a better record for recognizing and endorsing sound drama than any other American audience, whether first-night or twentieth night. The notion that it was the New York first-night audience that placed its imprimatur upon such successful whim-wham as "East Is West," "Experience," "Three Wise Fools" and "Three Faces East"—to name but four instances out of forty—is nonsense: any person who was present at these premières will recall the unmistakable coolness that pervaded the auditoriums. These plays have succeeded despite their first-night audiences, not because of them. Belasco, the best of American showmen, apparently afraid of the typical Broadway first-night audience, shrewdly excludes it by buying up the entire house and filling the auditorium with hand-picked boosters. The New Theater produced good plays, barred out the regular Broadway first-night audience, filled the chairs instead with conspicuous personages in metropolitan politics, finance, society and letters—and blew up. The Rialto first-night mob, loud, cheap, vulgar in manner and

appearance, has yet—as white clover is seen sometimes to grow out of a dunghill—bequeathed success to "Peter Pan" where a Washington first-night audience had bequeathed failure, and to "The Poor Little Rich Girl" where a Philadelphia first-night audience had bequeathed failure, and to "Justice" where a Boston first-night audience had bequeathed failure, and to "Good Gracious Annabelle" where a New Haven Yale first-night audience had bequeathed failure, and to "Old Lady 31," "Clarence," *et al.*, where other such first-night American audiences, commonly regarded as of superior quality, had similarly bequeathed failure.

The Broadway first-night audience has enthusiastically received a Bahr's "Master," a Tolstoi's "Redemption," a Knoblauch's "Kismet," a Benelli's "Jest," a Tarkington's "Seventeen," a Rostand's "L'Aiglon," an Echegaray's "El Gran Galeoto" and a Shaw's "Fanny's First Play" for every second Peg Franklin's "Thunder" and Sam Shipman's "First Is Last" that it has snickered out of court. It has turned a cold shoulder to many "Mister Antonios," "Flames," "Omar the Tentmakers," "Birds of Paradise," "Way Down East," "Roads to Happiness," "Cures for Curables" and such like joke-fetchers that have subsequently gone out into the centres of American culture and made fortunes. And if it not infrequently votes some "Bought and Paid For" or some "Tailor-Made Man" a great art-work, let it not be forgotten that the presumably more cultured audiences which follow it, not only in New York but in the outlying capitals, support its judgment.

Percy Hammond, the Chicago Sargey, lately confected a *chronique scandaleuse* on the New York first-night gathering whereof the most stinging cuff, as I recall, was an allusion to the predominant number of loud-mouthed, gum-chewing, hatchet-faces. Quite true. So far as countenance goes, the New York first-night audience is in the main fully as lovely as the floor of a

Russian barbershop after a busy day. And so far as manners go, as cavalier as a gas-man. But what have looks and manners to do with the case? The smart and mannerful audiences assembled upon invitation by Winthrop Ames for his *premieres* have uniformly proved as irresponsive and as inept as a theater audience well can be. And see what has happened to the Stage Society with its especially selected audience! . . . Georg Brandes chews tobacco. Joseph Conrad looks like a Bolshie. Anatole France is surely no oriole. Sir Almoth Wright, they say, likes to drink his tea out of the saucer. And the greatest imaginative artist in America is in the habit, as his friends' rugs will bear ample testimony, of expectorating upon the floor. . . . As the better understanding and keener appreciation of music is to be found not in the Golden Horseshoe with its St. Paul's School-Harvard kultur, but among the ugly, lowly folk in the high galleries, so—though clearly in lesser degree—is the more accurate response to drama to be found not in the post-dinner party cultures of sequent performances, but in the uncouth yet theater-loving Rialto first-night enthusiasts.

In this theater-love and enthusiasm, a love and enthusiasm that are extravagantly inclusive, that embrace the worst with the best, we have, indeed, the surest confounding of those who most loudly inveigh against the New York first-night audience. If this audience praises everything indiscriminately—as its critics contend—how can it be said of the audience that it is hurtful to the production of good plays? If an audience cheers Marjorie Rambeau in "The Unknown Woman" with the same vigour that it cheers Tarkington's "Clarence," the audience may be a damn fool but it is certainly not an audience either hostile to or corruptive of the production of a good play. . . . Well, I dare say that I carefully present only the prettier side of the picture. But the picture is perhaps not without that side. What, indeed, would happen to the American drama if it were regularly di-

vulged for the first time—over a period of ten years, say,—to an audience made up entirely of Columbia University professors?

The Broadway first-night audience is doubtless not nearly so much to blame as the Broadway producers who, imagining that it is what it is not, cater to its hypothetical ignorance, vulgarity and artistic anæsthesia. The consequence, even in terms of the drama that is piffle, is piffle piffissimo. For thus we get the procession of plays like "Five O'Clock" in which the initially amusing story of a man in an insane asylum who, upon gaining his freedom, goes to live with his relatives, gives ear for a spell to their empty conversation and stupid social enterprises, and then one night sneaks back to the comfort and comparative sanity of the asylum—in which this satiric story is converted into the yokel tale of a man in an insane asylum who fights to prove his sanity that he may take up his life again with these very relatives. And thus we get the procession of motion picture masterpieces like "Broken Blossoms" in which the Limehouse district in London is spectacularly depicted as rich in Chinese in their picturesquely embroidered native kimonos, where the sad truth is that the great majority of the residents of that quarter dress very much like Mencken.

But enough. Let us to the business of the meeting. Let us view some of the more recent exhibits vouchsafed by the local producers to these theoretical cossacks of art.

II

ONCE again in "Cæsar's Wife" (*née* "Made in Heaven") we observe the author of "The Moon and Sixpence" writing like the author of "The Explorer." The theatrical Maugham remains still the novelist of the latter work: he is as far from the novelist of the former—or "Of Human Bondage"—as are Kolb and Dill from the German Reichstag. As I noticed last month, it is a phenomenon that confounds the critic.

The novelist Maugham shows a constant growth; the playwright Maugham is, as he began, merely an inferior Hubert Henry Davies. His latest effort is a rehash of St. James's Theater comedy on end: a humourless disposition of the marionettes of Grundy, Sutro et Cie upon the eternal triangle checkerboard. The meticulously valeted M.P., K.C. of a husband with the talcum-sprinkled hair, the flouncy young wife Violet, and the young secretary of the legation are duly moved from square to square until theater time arrives for the young secretary to fall in love with the rich American girl from Chicago and for the young wife to realize her husband's worth—he has known all along of her girlish infatuation but has nobly eaten out his heart in silence—and fall with a happy gargle into his arms.

If poetry, in Wordsworth's phrase, takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity, comedy of this common species takes its origin from tranquillity recollected in emotion. The emotion is not intrinsically meretricious, but rather misplaced and malapropos. It calls for the purge of a reflective wit and humour. Without this wit and humour such comedy is a teapot in a tempest. The play has been lavishly mounted in Mr. Ziegfeld's characteristic manner and offers Miss Billie Burke and an expensive company to its unfolding.

III

HIGHLY venerated by the Rialto hazlitts as a *tour de force* in the realistic producing method, Mr. Belasco's production of "The Son-Daughter," by himself and Mr. George Scarborough, actually achieves its most telling *coup* in the impressionistic producing method. The first act and the second act of the play, staged in the familiar Belasco extra-realistic manner, are—even by the word of this hazlitt—*not* impressive. But the undeniable melodramatic effectiveness of the last act of the play is—in the two particular scenes most frequently commented upon in

the daily journals—wholly and entirely due to Mr. Belasco's temporary rejection of realism and his reliance, instead, upon impressionism or, perhaps more accurately, relative impressionism or modified realism.

In the first of these two scenes, a Chinese den, Mr. Belasco literally takes a leaf from Gordon Craig and by the adroit employment of simple curtains and lights gains a far more remarkable effect of scenic depth, darkness and mystery than he has hitherto ever gained with his tons of Fourth Avenue delicatessen. The picture, disregarding the crude traffic that passes within it, is dramatic in the extreme. And so with the one moment in the succeeding scene where the comparatively impressionistic method is permitted to take the place of the realistic. This second scene, depicting a Chinese wedding chamber, is heavy with all the Belasco extravagant "realism." A million dollars' worth of scenery clutters up the stage. All that the scenery needs, so suggests the spectator's mind, is Al Jolson and a chorus. The action transpiring within this gaudy suite fails to move the audience until—suddenly—Belasco divests his stage of its glaring literality, moves his protagonists behind partly transparent curtains, dramatizes the lighting and swings his action against the Appia-Lert silhouette-shadow frame. The effect is electric. The audience is held fascinated. In this second instance, of course, the impressionistic method is impressionistic not in the way the first instance is, but purely by comparison with what directly precedes and follows it. Yet it is by virtue of its relative impressionistic quality that it achieves the very effect believed by the local lessings to be due to the stereotyped Belasco realism.

These are the only interesting features of the production. But they suggest that Mr. Belasco may be reconsidering his craft, to the immeasurable betterment of it. I should like to see him try his hand at a full evening of the sort of thing he here confines to

some fifteen or twenty minutes: he has made so happy a beginning. The staging and lighting of that Chinese den scene are, to my way of looking at it, the very best things he has ever done. The play itself is silence: a cheap and absurd melodrama given a specious dignity by being played in the tempo of Bach's "Trauerode." Miss Lenore Ulric has the leading role and gives only a moderately good performance. Even at her worst, however, I somehow like her. She is, to me, one of those peculiarly agreeable actresses like Ethel Barrymore, Laurette Taylor and Margaret Lawrence who are pleasant even in their faults. The best performance in the supporting troupe is that of Mr. Harry Mestayer in what is, after all, a sure-fire part.

IV

ON the night of December the first, after six tense weeks of hoarse whispers, *sotto voce* impartings, rich eye winks, confidential reports from nephews of the stage-hands and from spies perched in windows across the way equipped with opera glasses and telescopes, some two thousand automobiles and taxicabs tore madly at risk of life and limb through the streets of New York and unloaded at the Century Theater an avid cargo of 3,500 or more breathless patrons of art who had fought with one another to pay all the way from eleven to ninety-five dollars a seat for the princely boon of looking at a girl who—according to the hot inside information—would actually walk right out on the stage in *puris naturalibus*.

The excitement at the doors baffled description. The shouts of men struggling desperately to make the entrances leading to the hall of exhibition mingled with the cries of jostled and jammed grandes dames. A. H. Woods and P. G. Wodehouse, who had come in complete ignorance of the bruited *pièce de résistance* and had paid twelve dollars a seat on the strength of the good acting record made by the leading man, Mc-

Kay Morris, when he appeared in the Dunsany plays with Stuart Walker, were caught in the crush between F. P. Adams and Herbert Bayard Swope and barely escaped with their lives. T. R. Smith, editor of the *Century Magazine*, attempting to make his way to his seat in time not to miss anything good, lost a piece of his right ear and suffered a fracture of the external condyle. Joe Moore, director general of the Hearst magazines, Harry Kip, Winfield Sheehan, and Knopf, the publisher, arrived eventually at their respective fauteuils with their clothing in ribbons. Three old ladies, trodden underfoot by Louis V. DeFoe, fainted and had to be removed to St. Vincent's hospital. Edgar Selwyn, determined to be there when it happened or die in the attempt, stepped back three paces, took a flying leap over the heads of Avery Hopwood, Philip Bartholomae and an unidentified Methodist clergyman and, falling upon the latter, broke two of his ribs. Frank Crowninshield, having had the foresight and perspicacity to hide a baseball bat under his overcoat, managed to make his way through the surging mass but in doing so jumped upon and broke John D. Williams' right ankle. Frank Wilstach, Sergei Rachmaninoff, Florenz Ziegfeld, Gene Buck and the Rev. Dr. Felix Parkinson of the Springfield Second Baptist Church lost their hats and James Montgomery Flagg suffered serious and painful bruises about the back. Justice Peter Hendricks, ex-Ambassador James W. Gerard and George Middleton, who like many of the above had come to the place in all innocence, were rammed so hard by Arthur Lowblan, Secretary of the Sharpshurg Y. M. C. A., and Lawrence Reamer, dramatic critic for *The Sun* (whose long, incapacitating rheumatism got well with a miraculous suddenness no sooner the attendant in the lobby shouted that the curtain was about to go up inside), that it was full twenty minutes before they could regain their breaths.

The occasion, specifically, was the American première of Pierre Fron-

daie's dramatization of Louys' novel "Aphrodite," done into English by George Hazleton—an indifferent, expurgated dramatic text derived from an indifferent novel but mounted by the Messrs. Comstock and Gest with a beauty and richness that made the original production in the Théâtre Renaissance look like the stage of the Provincetown Players. Of the incidental Fokine bacchanale, the rough old *Times*, seizing its fevered brow, gasped, "Its beauty makes you swoon!" However, the bacchanale left me much as it found me. I tried to swoon, but bless me, I couldn't: something must be wrong with old Giorgio. It is an admirably directed and finely executed bacchanale, and its colour is excellent, but I don't know about its swoon-power. Maybe I ought to see a doctor. As for the lady without any clothes on (the statue of Aphrodite), what the crowd eventually saw, along toward eleven o'clock, was a fat blonde girl so heavily coated with flour that she resembled a large charlotte russe. But as a spectacle the exhibition is a luscious one—the scene of the Queen's entrance in Act I, for instance, is as eye-fetching a picture as the local stage has revealed in a long time; and of the role of Chrysis the moving-picture actress, Miss Dorothy Dalton, gives a surprisingly effective performance.

V

UNLESS the impresarios begin very soon to exhibit better judgment, the most recent attempt to institute a French theater in America will in all probability meet the fate of the late Copeau enterprise. Called the Théâtre Parisien, this newest attempt launches itself with a bottle of very sour juice. After an elaborate series of cornet solos in which it promulgated itself as a sponsor of the best, freshest and gayest up-to-date comedies and revues of the Paris boulevards, we find—once the advance tooting is done—that what the entrepreneurs offer as samples of "the best, freshest and gayest up-to-date

comedies and revues" are (1) Pierre Veber's "Main Gauche," an out-dated comedy produced in Paris twenty years ago; (2) "Chonchette," probably the poorest thing ever signed by the otherwise admirable team of Flers and Cailavet, and produced in Paris nineteen years ago; (3) Hennequin and Billaud's "La Gueule du Loup," an out-dated comedy covered with the dust of sixteen Paris years; (4) Pierre Wolff's and Georges Courteline's old Théâtre Michel comedy "La Cruche"; and (5) a feeble vaudeville by André Mauprey. "La Musique Adoucit les Coeurs."

Whether this selection is due to poor judgment or to the circumstance that the royalties on such ancient manuscripts are low—let us perhaps remember the Frenchman's notorious economical nature—the selection offers a musky omen. Copeau failed by virtue of his inability to imagine interesting programs. His theater, operated largely with venerable and, in the theater, tiresome plays, was less a theater than a library. As a library, it was august and interesting. As a theater, it was approximately as interesting as a mausoleum. The Théâtre Parisien, at least thus far, vouchsafes the same nearness to modernity, the same measure of contact with dramatic life, and the same close affinity with the French stage of today that Copeau vouchsafed. And, save a selective judgment interpose itself, the handwriting begins faintly to show upon the wall.

This is what the hick hazlitt idiotically calls destructive criticism. By way of what the same kidney of arbiter elegantiarum calls constructive criticism, let us suggest to the impresarios a short program of available modern French comedies, farces and revues that are representative of the present-day boulevard theater at its most amusing best and that, presented in America, would doubtless attract to a local French theater many persons who, in the current instance, remain unpersuaded. The program: Sacha Guitry's "L'Illusioniste," a genuinely humorous comedy that will in all probability be adapted

to within an inch of its life when it reaches the English-speaking stage; the same playwright's "Veilleur du Nuit," a somewhat less original but nonetheless diverting farce; the well-known "Le Rubicon" that has baffled the numerous local attempts at adaptation; Georges Feydeau's ten-year-old but still fresh and audacious "Occupe Toi d'Amélie"; Lucien Gleize's sardonically amusing "Le Veau d'Or"; again Guitry's "Le Beau Mariage"; Zamacois' "Dame du Second," as an engaging experiment upon the E string; or Robert Dieudonné's "Le Crampon."

Other pieces that the impresarios might happily take under advisement are such as the vulgar but uproarious "Cocotte Bleue" of the Cluny; Felix Gandera's "Le Coucher de la Mariée," done last year at the Athénée, and, at least from the printed page, a droll enough theatrical evening; Louis Verneuil's bright comedy "Pour Avoir Adrienne"; Carel's Guignol anchovy, "En Beaute"; by way of revue the work of the inimitable and indefatigable Rip; by way of melodious *bouffonnerie* such things as young Guitry's Marigny "Pas Complet!" with tunes by Pouget; and by way of hors d'œuvres such things as Paul Gialferi's "La Bien-faitrice." Here is the stuff of fresh smiles and laughter. Here, roughly, is more or less the type of thing the Théâtre Parisien ought give us.

VI

"THE Rise of Silas Lapham" is a sixth-rate dramatization by Lillian Sabine of the celebrated third-rate novel by William Dean Howells. The production is sponsored by the Theater Guild. This organization, after a very promising beginning, appears to have suffered a serious artistic cramp. I leave a first-hand criticism of it to Mr. Eugene O'Neill, from one of whose recent letters I take the liberty of quoting. The play to which O'Neill refers as his own is to my mind an exceptional piece of native dramatic writing; privileged a reading of the manuscript, I found it

uncommonly sound and of a quality unusual in the home-made drama. It is named "The Straw." Herewith, then, what O'Neill has, in part, to say in reply to my question as to why he did not submit this play to the Guild:

"... The Theater Guild have seen the play and rejected it. They said it was most excellent but not the kind of play for their public. Since 'John Ferguson' inoculated them with the virus of popular success—quite contrary to their expectations—I'm afraid they've become woefully worried about the supposed tastes of 'their public.' I speak not only from my own experience. Before 'Ferguson' set them on horseback they had decided to do Susan Glaspell's 'Bernice' this season. But now they have discovered that 'their public' would never—and the latest I hear is that James K. Hackett is to star for them in 'Silas Lapham.' My God! The trouble seems to be that you can't eliminate the weakness of the old Washington Square Players by merely changing the name. In my opinion the Guild is doomed to fail through the same timid endeavour to please 'their public.' ... No, even Al Woods is preferable to a success-ridden Guild. He, at least, has few inhibitions."

VII

JOHN DRINKWATER'S "Abraham Lincoln," shrewdly advertised by the more than shrewd Arnold Bennett, is an absurdly over-rated piece of work. I shall treat of it at length on a more leisurely occasion. J. Hartley Manners' "One Night In Rome" is a pot-boiler illuminated by the charm of Miss Laurette Taylor. "Monsieur Beaucaire," the Gilbert Miller production of Tarkington's familiar play with a delicate score by André Messager, provides an uncommonly engaging evening, well worth the ear. This Miller, a son to Henry, is an intelligent fellow and one of very considerable taste. "The Phantom Legion," a spook opus by Anthony Paul Kelly, is movie fodder with a Finley Peter Grimm air.

From the Diary of a Reviewer

By H. L. Mencken

December 2.
TWO hours trying to read "Pilgrimage," by Dorothy M. Richardson—four fattish volumes, with a pifflish introduction by May Sinclair, the lady genius. I give it up. This is my fourth attempt, and I shall try no more. Henceforth my life must be hollow to that extent at least: I shall die without having read the works of Dorothy M. Richardson. La Sinclair's introduction is characteristically nonsensical—the solemn ponderosity of the incurable dilettante. She puts it forward as a great merit that La Richardson does not pretend to the omniscience of the usual novelist—that nothing is ever said about any of the other characters that is not within the knowledge of Miriam Henderson, the heroine. This trick she calls a "sustained immersion," i.e., in the personality of Miriam. Well, is it worth getting into a sweat about? Isn't it, in fact, the chief mark of every autobiographical novel? And hasn't it been employed by Joseph Conrad, say in "Lord Jim," with a hundred times the effect La Richardson ever manages to pump up? That effect in "Pilgrimage" is dismally feeble. The stuff tires me unbearably. I shall waste no more time upon it.

Nor upon any other tales by lady novelists out of England. Moreover, I sicken of looking at their photographs—with their mannish clothes, frowsy hair and appalling spectacles. The higher education of women has done even less for the sex in England than it has done in America—in truth, a great deal less. The prematurely elderly virgins who pour out of Girton and Newnham seem to leave behind them

all the native cynicism of their kind—and their sharp cynicism, when all is said and done, is probably the precise quality that makes women in general appear intelligent—and charming. One goes to women to escape from sentimentality. They are antidotes to maudlinity, counterblasts to male snuffling. But the bluestockings of England, having at last grabbed the right to the puerile education of men, acquire with it the lugubrious imbecility of men. Read, for example, any of the English woman suffrage literature—say the books of Christabel Pankhurst, LL.B. It is almost impossible to imagine such highfalutin tosh being written seriously. It reads like an extravagant and cruel burlesque of itself. It has all the gaudy windiness and lack of humor of a set speech by a Southern United States Senator, or of an uplifting article in the *Ladies' Home Journal*, or of a tome on American ideals by a third-rate university right-thinker.

As for La Sinclair herself, her novels grow worse and worse. One observes in them a great appearance of profundity and a great hollowness. What she has to say about her characters is never worth hearing. It is, at best, merely the sort of stuff heard at afternoon lectures—the sort of stuff that impresses the defectively intelligent. In four or five years past I have encountered but one novel by an Englishwoman that was of any genuine merit whatsoever, and that one was written by the daughter of a peer—obviously no victim of Newnham. The women novelists of the United States do vastly better. Here, perhaps, is the only department of literature in which we beat (or even

approach) the English. But here we have a tremendous lead—a consequence, perhaps, of our system of co-education, which causes the girls to keep their hair combed even while they are studying the Greek aorist, and teaches them the shimie as well as sex hygiene, and so preserves their sense of humor and their sound scorn of man. One book by Willa Sibert Cather is worth all the novels written by the lady novelists of England since the close of the last century.

December 4.

Paul Elmer More's "With the Wits" unearths a wiseacre long forgotten, to wit, George Savile, First Marquis of Halifax, the E. W. Howe of the seventeenth century. His likeness to Howe is indeed remarkable. Both are intense realists in ethics; both have a great tolerance for human frailty; both are suspicious of idealism; both put their conclusions into homely terms. Such moralists are rare—and very valuable. "We are much beholden to Machiavel and others," said Bacon, "that wrote what men do, and not what they ought to do." The ethical precepts of a professor sitting in a library or of a prophet in his wallow or even of a god stooping out of heaven are of no genuine value. They may be beautiful, but too often they do not work; the task they put upon us is as impossible as that of a one-armed man employed to play the violin or that of a Methodist parson told off to think; we simply haven't got the machinery to perform it. But the ethical *practices* of a reasonably decent and honest man are worth studying. They work in his case, and they may thus work in ours—and if they do we'll be decent and honest too, which is pretty for to see, and not common. No sane man wants to be a saint, for even if it were possible it would be disgusting: the "good" man often gags even himself. But if every Englishman of the seventeenth century had been a Halifax, then it would have been the best of luck for England. And if every American of

today were as honest, as well-disposed and as shrewd as Howe, then it would be impossible to say so much in favor of a Japanese invasion, with the burning of New York and the massacre of its inhabitants.

More's book, in general, is dull stuff—correct and virtuous, but deadily dull. He spends too much time collecting information and too little time digesting it. His essays on Pope, Swift and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu say absolutely nothing new. In his essay on Aphra Behn, the Elinor Glyn of the seventeenth century, he wastes a lot of space debating with an English pundit the question whether La Behn ever actually visited Surinam and whether her father was ever actually governor of that colony, as she herself used to maintain. Both More and his antagonist base their arguments upon intuition, word-juggling and the doctrine of probabilities. It seems to have occurred to neither of them to inspect the colonial records of Surinam, probably easily accessible in London. There is no sign that either has ever made the attempt. A good deal of so-called scholarship, especially in England, is grounded upon just such stupidity. It is simply medieval text-chewing. It gets nowhere, and is not even amusing.

But More himself is, to me at least, a very interesting man. He is a perfect specimen of the civilized Puritan—pulled in the one direction by the lascivious lures of the bozart, and in the other direction by his inherited fears of beauty. One finds him, on the one hand, getting a sneaking sort of joy out of Beaumont and Fletcher, Swift and even La Behn; one finds him, on the other hand, full of moral indignation against such fellows as Oscar Wilde and Lionel Johnson. He actually argues, in all seriousness, that Wilde was a product of German influences! . . . More's dislike of romanticism is easily understood. The crime of the romanticists was that they restored gusto to literature—that they made writing a joyous business once more, as it was in the days of the Greeks. The classi-

cists, so-called, avoided that weakness. Literature, to them, was a moral enterprise, with stern and inflexible purposes; its aim was not to make men happy, but to make them uncomfortable. Thus, by the More system, Cotton Mather was a much greater artist than Nietzsche.

December 5.

Finley Peter Dunne's "Mr. Dooley on Making a Will" is tiresome stuff, with now and then a stray jocosity of some ingenuity and merit. Dunne is constantly coupled with George Ade, which is almost as if one were to couple Mendelssohn with Brahms. Ade is a satirist of a very high order, perhaps the best that America has ever produced. Dunne is simply a journeyman funny man. His Dooley is the immemorial comic Irishman of farce, with a few touches that are not Irish at all.

December 7.

Prof. Dr. C. Alphonso Smith's "New Words Self-Defined" supplies some useful material for the future student of the American language, if such a mammal ever emerges from the academic sewers. Intrinsically, it is of small merit, for the learned professor has quite overlooked a number of important new locutions—e.g., *bevo-officer*, *patrioteer* and *dollar-a-year-man*—, he has included some that are not new but old—e.g., *shofar* and *to pass the buck*—, and he has omitted etymologies in important cases, and made no apparent effort to establish the dates of first use. In brief, the book is a very amateurish job, and needs rewriting. . . . Philology is one of the sciences that languish most horribly in America—that is, American philology, current philology. We have a good many excellent German scholars and some very good French and Spanish scholars, but the language that all of us speak is but little studied. There seems to be a general feeling in academic circles, in fact, that studying it with any seriousness would be *infra dig*. It is hard to discern the logical basis of that feeling. So far as I know, it is unheard of in

any other country. Perhaps incompetence is at the bottom of it; the philologists of the land may be making a virtue of their lack of skill. A living language is not easily studied. The business calls for wide information, sound professional knowledge and no little ingenuity. Prof. Dr. Smith, a fair example of the native language professor—he is head of the department of English at the Naval Academy—shows none of these qualities. His book might have been done just as well by any average schoolmarm or newspaper reporter.

December 8.

The Roosevelt literature, now flowing in so copiously, is mainly very hollow. Lawrence Abbott's "Impressions of Theodore Roosevelt" is all boyish adulation; William Roscoe Thayer's "Theodore Roosevelt" is bombastic and disingenuous; even "Theodore Roosevelt's Letters to His Children" is far from satisfying. Roosevelt was probably the most ardent poseur in American history; his offhand impulsiveness was laboriously thought out; he even posed when playing with his children. I shall have to do an article on him; it will make an excellent chapter for the next volume of "Prejudices." What ailed him chiefly, I think, was a defective grasp upon the concept of honor. He was forever sacrificing obligations of honor to obligations of morals. His constant insistence upon his fair dealing—his gabble about the square deal—may be explained in Freudian terms; he tried to conceal an incurable defect by creating an imaginary merit. No man could have been less fair. Even Woodrow is no more uncandid and unjust to opponents.

The notion seems to be general that Roosevelt was of aristocratic origin and habits of mind. I have even heard it argued that he was the first American president since John Quincy Adams who was a gentleman. Pishposh! Roosevelt came of a family, not of aristocrats, but of wealthy commercial gents. They were, a few generations

back, the Henry Fords of their time. Perhaps, in those days, even the Four Gospels were new to them: Roosevelt, in fact, has a suspicious likeness to Rosenfeldt. Theodore himself showed all the characteristic attitudes of a successful stockbroker. His morality was essentially a commercial morality; there was room in it for the most obvious over-reaching; he was the perfect pusher. But an amusing fellow! The best comedian ever on show in the national arena. I always voted for him.

December 10.

I am curious to see what the French make of Waldo Frank's "Our America." They must judge it finally, for though it is written in English and printed in New York, its writing was suggested by Frenchmen, and a French translation, I take it, is even now in press. What makes the book remarkable is the fact that it is the first volume on America, written by an American but addressed to foreigners, that shows the slightest inclination to tell the truth. The French, a realistic people, should at once detect and appreciate that singularity. In the past they have got dose after dose of heavy balderdash about American idealism, the "soul" of America, and other such stuff, chiefly from touring professors of the Henry van Dyke kidney. But here Frank cruelly spills the horrible fact, to wit, that America has, as yet, no more soul than a cow in a pasture—that the country is still in the preliminary stage of developing a mind—that it must go a very long way and forget many superstitions and get rid of a lot of bad blood before ever it presents to the world a spiritual and cultured face. What the van Dykes see, scanning the national scene, is 110,000,000 enraptured Presbyterians, all pure in heart, all bursting with nobility, all *Hofräte* of the Lord God Jehovah. What Frank sees is "a people who are still in the baby stage of playing with their toes."

A capital phrase. And a book curiously interesting. Often it grows a bit lyrical—the slang of the prevailing

optimism turned to the uses of the devil. But in the main it is well ordered and well composed. Perhaps I am a bit softish about it because the author, in one place, says that I am a meritorious fellow, for whose ease and happiness Yorktown and Gettysburg were not fought in vain. But this I doubt, for in the same paragraph he calls me middle-aged, and puts me alongside such doddering bags of bones as Huneker and Dreiser. The charge will stick in my gizzard a good while longer than the kiss is felt on my brow. To be middle-aged is to be—well, *what* is it? It is to have hope without expectation, courage without strength, desire without the fire. It is to be a near-sighted man at a burlesque show. It is to shimmie with the lumbago. Nay, I don't want to be middle-aged. Let me be young until suddenly, one frosty day, I am old, and then let me die. . . . And let Frank taste hell for that libel.

December 11.

Two hours reading Philip Littell's "Books and Things." Somehow, it strikes me as extraordinarily feeble. The political parts are far superior to the literary parts. The little piece upon Sargent's portrait of Dr. Wilson is excellent irony; the essay on the Flag Day address blows up the Woodrovia blather very neatly. But the rest has a family likeness—well, to that sort of thing. It is polite, it is graceful, but it is hollow; there is no resolute thinking out of problems; one is never challenged or surprised. In brief, Littell shows plain traces of the professorial manner. He is a sort of bridge connecting the *New Republic* with Harvard.

December 12.

All the art critics I know say that John C. Van Dyke is the old woman of art criticism in America—the Hamilton Wright Mabie of the studios. He lectures, I believe, at Princeton, along with Alfred Noyes. He once gave æsthetic instruction to Middle

Western women's clubs in the columns of the *Ladies' Home Journal*. Nevertheless, I have this day read his "American Painting and Its Tradition" without pain. It may be, for all I know, unsound criticism, but it is surely not bad writing. On the contrary, it is unflaggingly diverting from cover to cover. More, it fills me with a desire to see some of the pictures described—and ordinarily I never go to see pictures; painting is my blind spot. Thus, whatever its faults, it at least achieves, in the case of one reader, the primary purpose of a work of criticism: it converts him into a customer of the work of art.

December 13.

A day of hard struggle with bad essays: "From a Southern Porch," by Dorothy Scarborough; "The Anatomy of Society," by Gilbert Cannan; "Literature With a Capital L," by MacGregor Jenkins; "Addresses in America," by John Galsworthy; "Leaves in the Wind," by one calling himself "Alpha of the Plough"; "What Billingsgate Thought," by W. A. Newman Dorland; and "Books in General," by "Solomon Eagle." This "Solomon Eagle," I believe, is J. D. Squire, editor of the new English review, the *London Mercury*. It is amazing that his contributions to the *New Statesman*, here reprinted, should have attracted so much attention. There are at least a dozen American newspaper critics who write quite as well and have a good deal more to say. Now and then, of course, he is effective—as, for example, in his devastating essay on the North Carolina Paul Elmer More, Prof. Dr. Archibald Henderson—but in the main he sticks to the puerile whimsicality of the English *causerie* hack. Galsworthy's American discourses are empty of serious thinking. No doubt he thought it scarcely worth his while to waste genuine ideas upon the sort of dunderheads who frequent Lotus Club dinners, meetings of the Society of Arts and Sciences, and public functions at Columbia University. In

one of these addresses he actually told his auditors that America was a land of free inquiry and unfettered utterance! The assembled boobery, I dare say, swallowed it gravely. The English, for all their superficial appearance of stupidity, have a profound humor and a sharp wit. That humor and wit are never more beautifully displayed than when they are poking fun at Yankee jackasses.

The Cannan book is full of highfalutin stuff about the coming reorganization of society, with Privilege knocked in the head and Truth and Justice rescued from the dungeons. Personally, I have no belief in any such reorganization. The capitalistic age is not closing; it has barely come to dawn. Whatever the origins of the late war, its issue was obviously a gigantic victory for capitalism. In all the Western countries, before the war, capitalism and government were at loggerheads; today their love affair is so touching that it must melt the hardest heart. Observe what has happened here in the United States. Six years ago it was the fashionable thing to flirt with radicalism; the land swarmed with parlor Socialists; all sorts of ultra-democratic schemes were in the air. Today it is almost worth a free citizen's liberty to be caught reading Marx, or to express the opinion that Debs has been in jail long enough, or to argue that even a Russian Jew deserves to be given his day in court, confronted by his accusers, before he is deported to God knows where, or clubbed by the police, or murdered in cold blood by mine guards. All the complex machinery for harassing those who opposed the war is now converted into an engine for punishing the foes of capital. A man suspected of having designs on capitalism is quite without any rights in our law. He is denied the use of the mails. Bar associations exhort their members to refuse to represent him when he is accused. He may be thrown into jail without any intelligible legal process, and kept there at the pleasure of his jailers. No newspaper will print his

defense. He is deprived of the rights of petition, of free speech and of lawful assemblage. His domicile is not inviolable. His private papers may be pawed through by any government detective who is inclined to take the trouble. He has no standing whatever in law or equity. And yet there are Red optimists, and one hears that the Revolution is set for day after tomorrow!

A gypsy tells me that I shall live to be eighty-six. I expect to die under capitalism, and to see a Jew President of the United States before I die. Jacob H. Schiff is too old and Otto H. Kahn was born in Germany, but it will be some member of the same imperial line—not a Bolshevik Jew out of Grand Street, but a respectable Protestant Episcopal Jew out of Wall Street. If his first name is not Irving, then his last name will be Noblestone or Rosehill. I shall, of course, vote for him. I tire of voting for mountebanks; before I die I want to vote for at least one genuinely intelligent man. For intelligence will survive and prevail, as it always survives and prevails. The common man is an incurable idiot. If the time ever comes when capitalism can't hold him in check by force, it will hold him in check by chicane. That new time, indeed, already casts its shadows before. The boob nibbles at the predestined bait. Capitalism convinces him, so easily that it is laughable, that *its* enemies are also *his* enemies—that all of them, at bottom, are the secret agents of foreign demons, yesterday the Kaiser and today Lenine, and so bent upon busting the Republic, overturning civilization, grabbing his Ford and his phonograph, burning down his house, and ravishing his wife. The spectacle is really stupendous. How any sane man can remain a so-called Liberal in the face of it is more than I can make out. As for me, I enjoy the show to the full. Inasmuch as all of my private interests are on the side of capitalism, I am honestly in favor of capitalism. What delights me is the sight of imbeciles whooping for it whose interests are all on the other

side. It is as if rats should form bodyguards to protect cats.

Floyd Dell's "Were You Ever a Child?" is full of the same poisons that flavor the Cannan book. Dell is a sentimental Liberal of a somewhat archaic type—a left-over from the parlor Socialist movement of six or seven years ago. His thesis here seems to be that the education currently on tap in our schools is no more than an idle form of regimentation—that it assumes all children to be alike, and fills them with knowledge in the same automatic, impersonal way that bottles used to be filled with beer at St. Louis. His plea is that they are not actually all alike, and that their differences ought to be taken into account, to the end that their personalities may be properly developed. So far, so good. What he overlooks, it seems to me, is the fact that the average child is quite as devoid of ponderable personality as the average adult. Nothing, in point of fact, would be accomplished by the scheme he favors. The most carefully considered and assiduous instruction would have no more effect upon those infant blank cartridges than the present idiotic cramming has. Dell's trouble is that he romanticizes the generality of human beings. He assumes that they are as intelligent as he is, and that they would respond to pedagogical suggestion as he responds. The truth is that they are no more intelligent than his dog is, or his valet, or his pastor. Even such meagre educational facilities as are now provided are wasted upon them. They go into the schools blockheads and they come out blockheads. The few who are intrinsically superior are not nearly so much damaged by the present regimentation as Dell seems to think. They react from it quickly and infallibly. The notion that intelligent children do not know it when their teachers are fools is quite unsound. They find it out almost instantly—and the subsequent proceedings interest them no more. All schools, I daresay, are bad. Going to school is the worst way ever invented of acquiring knowl-

edge. But the worst school is not very much worse than the best school.

December 15.

Trying to read Arthur Bartlett Maurice's "The Paris of the Novelists." A huge tome, full of mush.

December 16.

Ralph Adams Cram's "Walled Towns" shows the extreme swing of the reaction against the modern spirit. Cram's middle name suggests something: perhaps he is related to the Adamses of Quincy, the only genuinely aristocratic family that New England has ever produced. The same bitter distaste for democracy, for commercialism and for materialism that one encounters in the books of Charles Francis Adams II, Henry Adams and Brooks Adams—what an astounding trio of brothers!—is also to the fore in "Walled Towns." What Cram proposes is a complete abandonment of industrialism and a return to the free-city organization of society. Let us, he says, burn down our factory towns and let the grass grow over their ruins. Let each city produce everything that it needs, from paper collars to rat-traps and from pianos to horse liniment. Let there be a high wall around it, and a heavy *octroi* on baubles from without. Within there will be peace, and prosperity, and ease, and happiness. . . . I doubt it. Cram's dream of a new Golden Age is as vain as all other such dreams. Moreover, it is not new. It was dreamed before him by Ruskin; it has been dreamed nightly for half a dozen years past by the English Guild Socialists. How long would such a walled city last? Just long enough for all its honest and happy workingmen to escape. The first train outward bound for Bayonne, N. J., or Homestead, Pa., or Lawrence, Mass., would be loaded to the guards with them. . . . Cram, I fear, begins to take his medievalism too seriously. It is lovely—but one cannot eat heliotropes.

December 18.

Miriam Alice Franc's "Ibsen in England" is an almost unreadable book, but it was nevertheless worth writing. The story of the battle that was waged for and against the Norwegian kill-joy in London is an important chapter in the history of ideas in our time. The gladiators on both sides were extraordinarily enterprising and ferocious; the conflict raged like a combat of cavalry. In the end the Ibsenites won a handsome victory—only to discover that old Henrik was already dead. The curious thing is that the hottest part of the fight was over non-essentials, to wit, over the intellectual content of the Ibsen dramas. Ibsen's actual ideas, in point of fact, were of only secondary importance; what made him a great man was the revolution he effected in dramatic technique—in the manner of the drama more than in its matter. Even the worst Broadway hacks of today show some faint shadow of his influence. The devices of Scribe would be laughed at at the Hippodrome. But one still hears him talked of, not as the superb technician that he was, but as a profound philosopher. Well, what was his philosophy? Who can state his ideas?

December 23.

Despite the high cost of paper and printing, the Modern Library continues to flourish. More, it continues to be intelligently edited: all the new volumes are of sound value. Now comes a rival—the International Pocket Library. Its volumes are much smaller than those of the Modern Library, and sell for much less. The first dozen titles are well chosen, but the binding could be improved. Red lettering on rough maroon paper is almost illegible. . . . The best of all the new series of reprints is that of foreign classics in fiction, edited by Burton Rascoe. The first volume, "Madame Bovary," is a genuinely beautiful book, and Rascoe's introduction is brief and well-considered.

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